



# PROBLEM OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

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TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
DR. BENI PRASAD.





## FOREWORD

India is passing through a crisis. For the first time in her age-long history she is about to attain the status of independent statehood founded upon the free will and the common consent of her people. India has had periods in her past which in splendour of their achievement challenge comparison with the most glorious epochs of world history. But never before had she known a state in which all her peoples were gathered under one rule and in which the direction of their life was in the hands of the people themselves.

The successful realization of this dual aim of unity and responsibility is no easy task. It required the highest degree of statesmanship and exercise of the supreme virtues of both will and judgment. To bind together four-hundred millions of human beings professing different faiths, speaking different languages, tracing descent from different ethnic stocks, living on different levels of culture into one political system deriving its sanction from all the groups and communities inhabiting a vast area and sustained by the fellow feeling of an enormous mass of humanity, is a task at which historic imagination may well feel staggered.

Any serious study of the problem which investigates the facts, analyses the forces, and suggests solutions to questions of undoubted complexity in a scientific spirit, is a welcome contribution.

Mr. Shanti Prasad Varma has devoted much thought to these matters. He has carefully considered the problems of the relation of Hindus and Muslims and of the relation of India and Britain. In discussing the first problem he has examined the arguments for and against the solutions proffered by various individuals and parties. The problem has accumulated a great deal of sentiment around it, and it is difficult to argue about it without

treading upon toes. It is creditable to Mr. Varma that he has sought to avoid the importation of emotion in dealing with a controversy which has roused so much passion.

Whether the line of reasoning followed by him will satisfy everybody is not certain. In any case only a dispassionate consideration of the Hindu Muslim question can lead us to results which may prove fruitful.

The chapters which have been devoted to the solution of the basic problem of reconciliation and the suggestions for political and cultural adjustments and integration contain valuable points. Mr. Varma's plea for launching a planned effort to remove misunderstandings between the communities deserves serious consideration.

Allahabad,  
18 May. 1946.

Tara Chand

## PREFACE

We stand on the threshold of great changes. The British rule—which dominated our life and culture for 150 years—is coming to an end. We are being ushered into a new period of history, in which the main responsibility of solving our national problems will fall on our own shoulders. Freedom this year is not a meaningless slogan. The trend of events all over the world seems to be confirming it.

Freedom is in sight. But freedom will bring its own problems. They will not be less serious than the problem of achieving national freedom which we were facing during the last half-century.

Our economic life has to be reconstructed. A new pattern of culture has to be evolved. We have to re-adjust our relations with the rest of the world on the plane of equality and brotherhood. But the most important, and perhaps the most intricate, is the problem of finding out a suitable constitutional machinery for our country.

This machinery has to be organized on democratic lines. There is no alternative. All other systems of government have proved to be antiquated, out-moded and sinister.

But democracy has got its own implications. Democracy pre-supposes the existence of a People, inspired by a deep sense of unity. Are the Indian People inspired by such a sense of unity? Does the majority in our country possess that 'political sense' which restrains it from doing anything 'which will destroy, or even seriously impair, the will of the minority to remain fellow-citizens of the majority'? Is there not a strong section of people in our country, claiming to be a full-fledged nation, which has expressed its determination to carve out a separate state for itself?

This book aims at a scientific analysis of this problem and the various other problems that arise out of it. But the main theme that I have taken up for discussion is whether democracy is at all feasible in India. I believe that it is. The various arguments that are generally advanced against the contention—the communal problem, the Congress 'fascism', the nature of political parties, ethnological divisions, ferment among the masses, national psychology—have all been critically discussed. Various schemes of partition—arising out of the vague longings of a poet-philosopher and culminating into the shrewd political bargaining of a power-politician—have been analysed. Constructive suggestions have been offered.

The book claims to be a scientific study of the current political problems. But it has been written in the spirit of an act of faith. I have passionately pleaded for the acceptance of conclusions which I have reached after rational study. I feel confident that if the suggestions are accepted they will help in the building up of a new atmosphere of sympathy and understanding, which democratic institutions will find it congenial for development. Democratic government will succeed or fail in our country to the extent to which cultural integration between the Hindus and the Muslims will become possible.

The book has grown out of discussion. In February 1945, some British friends invited me to give a talk, in an exclusively British meeting, on *India in relationship to the Imperial Power*. The foundations of this book were laid during that one hour's talk, followed by two-hours' heart-to-heart discussion. Towards the end of February, I was asked to read a paper in the Professors' Academy of Meerut College, presided over by the Hon'ble Sir Sita Ram, on *Political Deadlock and the Way Out*. A few days later I was called upon to discuss the same subject before a meeting of the Executive Committee of the local Students' Congress. In March, I found it necessary to discuss the questions of *Democracy, Partition* and

*Federalism* with my post graduate students in Political Science. A few weeks later I was prevailed upon by Boyd Barry, the enthusiastic Secretary of the 'Indian Affairs Forum' to give another talk, this time on *India and Democracy*, before a still larger gathering of Britishers. This was followed by a series of four talks, which I delivered at the request of the Vidya Bhawan, at Udaipur. The outline of the book was made complete during these Vidya-Bhawan talks. The talks were generally followed by discussion, which sometimes used to be continued during the long evening walks round the beautiful lakes of Udaipur. During these walks there used to be a number of Muslim friends also. The discussion was always in a healthy atmosphere of friendship and understanding.

I am naturally thankful to all my friends, British and Indian, who gave me innumerable opportunities of discussing these problems. All these friends have constantly urged upon me to bring out my views in a book form. The present book is really the outcome of their friendly and persistent encouragement. Of course, they cannot be held responsible for the numerous mistakes and shortcomings with which the book must be replete: they are the outcome of my own imperfections. I take full responsibility for them, and beg the forgiveness of the generous reader.

I am extremely thankful to Dr. Tarachand, Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Allahabad for kindly writing a foreword to the book and to Syt. K.C. Gautama my student in M.A. Politics, for preparing the index.

Meerut,

12th April, 1946.

Shanti Prasad Varma

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## INTRODUCTORY

The Indian National Movement is one of the big upsurges of the modern world: it can be compared with the Russian Revolution and the Chinese National Movement. Its roots lie in that cultural renaissance which began, about hundred and fifty years back, in the reaction of the western materialism on the spiritualism of the East. This cultural renaissance was based on the revival of our self-confidence in our ancient religion and culture. It was inaugurated by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who could stand against the predominating tendency of the contemporary Bengali youth of completely surrendering themselves to a process of westernization. Ram Mohan Roy placed before them, and before the western world also, the glory and greatness of the ancient culture of his own land. He had before him, recreated by his own studies and insight, the vast panorama of the Upanishadic philosophy. Ram Mohan Roy knew and propounded, by his translation of the Upanishads and indefatigable journalistic activities, the greatness of this philosophy, and awakened the self-confidence of the Indian in his own past. Yet, Ram Mohan Roy was not blind to the brighter side of the western culture, and he tried fully to inter-weave it into the new thought-pattern which he was laying down. It was out of this vast and comprehensive religious upheaval that the waves of social reform rose in their tumultuous fury and, for half a century, flooded the country. Keshab Chandra Sen was the father of this new social spirit, just as Ram Mohan Roy had been the leading light of the religious renaissance. The entire Prarthna Samaj Movement of Maharashtra, of which Chandavarkar, Bhandarkar and Ranade were the prominent leaders, was inspired and guided by him in the earlier stages. The movement of social reform took rapid strides with the spread of the Arya Samaj all over the country. The political movement is directly linked up with this new spirit of social reform. Gokhale was a fine blend of a social reformer and a politi-

cal worker. In Gandhi, we find a culmination of the process of which Gokhale was a formidable link. If we take Gandhi to be the barometer of our political movement and our nationalist awakening, we shall not find it difficult to understand how our political movement of today is only a highly developed form of our religious and cultural renaissance welling up in various social reform movements. Gandhi is making tremendous efforts to achieve India's freedom, but the end that he is pursuing is not political but a sociological transformation of the Indian people, and the means on which he lays stress are essentially religious.

Our political movement is, thus, not only political: it is much more than that. It is also not a mere negative effort to overthrow an alien rule. It is a vast constructive effort, a part of a resurgence of a new life in the country, having its deep and penetrating roots into the innermost soul of the Indian nation: as such it is bound to throw up its branches, laden with flowers and fruits, in all directions of the Indian sky. But it is also a part of a world-movement. The peoples of the world have struck up their tents, sounded their bugles of war, and are determined to shatter all narrow enclaves of autocratic power. Feudalism has been reduced to dust, monarchy thrown to dogs and capitalism, the last relic of mediaevalism, is being smothered. Democracy is everywhere on the march, however slow and surreptitious its steps might appear to be. All over the world, the proletariat is rising, the underdog has begun to snarl and bark and bite. Capitalism was killed long back in Russia. Fascism, its last citadel, has been brought down in Germany, Italy and Japan. Deep punches are being made into the flesh of Imperialism in the Arab States of the Middle East and the backward regions of Indonesia and Indo-China. The French and the Dutch empires lie bleeding. The British Empire totters. In this general effort at remoulding the pattern of the world, perhaps nearer to our heart's desire, India has to play an important part. Her national movement, in spite of its limitations and shortcomings is vitally linked up with all the progressive movements of the world, political as well as socio-economic. Our conflict with,

British imperialism is a part of a world-wide conflict of progress and reaction. Our national movement is, thus, linked up, on the one side, with an ancient religion and culture, and, on the other, integrally connected with the future world-order. It is partly because we are anxious to play our part in that future world-order that we want to throw away these chains of slavery that bind us to our antiquated regime.

There is another way in which India is connected with world politics. Small States are breaking down everywhere, and bigger States, or large federal organizations, are coming up. The recent world war saw a weakening of almost all the small States which had been masquerading for a long time on the political stage of the world as Great Powers. France, Italy, Germany, Japan: England also is fast being thrown into the shade. The still smaller States have gone completely out of the picture. The truth of what F. Naumann wrote some thirty years ago is now being fully borne out. "Our conceptions of size", he wrote in *Mittleuropa* "have entirely changed. Only very big States have any significance on their own account, all the smaller ones must live by utilizing the quarrels of the great, or must obtain leave if they wish to do anything unusual. Sovereignty, that is freedom to make decisions of wide historical importance, is now concentrated at very few places on the globe". A more recent writer, G.D.H. Cole, draws the same conclusion from the events of the Second World War. "The independence of small States", he writes in *Europe, Russia and the Future*, "and indeed of all States save the largest and richest in developed resources, is impracticable now that a mechanised army and air-force belonging to a great State can simply sweep aside all the resistance that they can offer. The utmost 'independence, that any small State can hope for in the future is a false independence, behind which lies the reality of complete domination by a great neighbour." "In a world in which the appeal to force still lies at the back of international relationships", he argues, "the sovereign State which is utterly unable to defend its frontiers is an anomaly." In fact, the nation-

states of yesterday are becoming an antiquated political phenomenon and they are being replaced by what might be described as super-States. The two States which have not only survived the recent world-conflict but have emerged as the strongest States in the world, namely the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Russia, both possess large, homogeneous population, large continuous living spaces and highly developed machine production, the three basic requirements for the existence of a super-state.

As we can clearly see, besides the two Great Powers mentioned above, there are two other countries, both in Asia, which satisfy the pre-requisites of a super-state, and are progressively moving in that direction. They are China and India. Both are bound to play a very important part in the international relations of tomorrow. China already has two pre-requisites of a super-state: a continuous living-space and a gigantic homogeneous mass of people. Under the hammer of Japanese onslaughts she had been rapidly growing in industrial skill and organization. In the words of Ely Culbertson, the author of *Total Peace*, "Nothing will stop the future industrial development of China; after the defeat of Japan, a liberated and reassembled China will grow industrially as fast as Russia after the First World War. Perhaps even faster, for she possesses what no other single nation in the world possesses—the enormous mass of four hundred and fifty million people, intelligent and ever-patient, moulded in the same image by a psycho-social pattern five thousand years old. As the same writer points out later, "The emergence of the new China will be an event of world-shaking importance, comparable to the birth of Soviet Russia and the growth of the American super-state." India lacks the sociological homogeneity of China. But here, as A. Cobban puts it, in his excellent study of *National Self-Determination*, "nationalist ideology is now so strong, India so great and populous, and the resources of Great Britain so comparatively limited, that one can hardly avoid the conclusion that the maintenance of British rule in its present form will prove increasingly

difficult". Once the British rule disappears, India is bound to move headlong on the same road to greatness, with almost as terrific a speed as China. "No country", writes Sir G. Schuster, in *India and Democracy*, "has a clearer field in which to develop its economic destiny by its own independent efforts. She has, in fact, at her disposal within her own boundaries the most extensive potential area for free trading in the world. Throughout this area run long-established traditions of tranquillity, respect for state authority, orderly and conscious administration, and the rule of law. The system of public finance is sound—the system of communication is fairly well developed and the railways and postal services are efficiently run. National conditions are on the whole favourable to wide development. There are large reserves of iron ore and coal in close juxtaposition and many other mineral resources."



triumphantly marched from success to success. Curzonian cussedness failed to crush it. Gandhi canalized the national hatred into the two Satyagraha campaigns, before which Chelmsford and Irwin had to bend. Linlithgow blew both hot and cold during his chequered career in this country, but for a long time his governors had to behave like good boys, and carry out the behests of nationalist ministries in eight out of eleven provinces. During the last forty years, political consciousness has rapidly filtered down from one social strata to another. Beginning as a holiday resort of political-minded upper middle-class intellectualists, the Indian National Congress has now become a mass-organization. By the twenties it had touched the lower middle classes; in the thirties, it embraced within its sweep the more enlightened section of the *Kisans* and the *Mazdoors*; in the forties, under the stress and storm of a world-wide war, it has affected the common mass on the street, the simple-minded villager in his field, the ignorant, half-crazy mill-hand in his factory, the soldier in the army, the naval rating, the hungry postal employee. "The Indian people today," in words of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, "are proud and virile and determined to be free. The flame of freedom runs through us all, whether we are civilians or army-men."

This freedom movement has gathered strength, particularly in its last phase, due to a favourable world-situation. Though victorious in two world-wars, the British power has definitely been on the decline. Ely Culbertson, in his *Total Peace*, has given us a graphic picture of the story of this decline :—

"The sun never set on the British Empire. But towards the end of the nineteenth century the British industrial sun began to set very rapidly. The first ominous symptoms came from the revolution in land communications. Better roads could be built, and much faster. The railway threatened to outflank the British sea-power. Since ancient times an army marching on foot was always slower than an army brought by ships. Strategically, the outer lines of communications, which were the sea lanes, dominated the inner land lines of communications. A sea-

power could always choose the point of attack, withdraw if need be, and attack elsewhere at will. Now, with the growing network of railways, the faster land lines of communications began to dominate the slower sea lines. The Baghdad railway and its branches threatened the solar plexus of the British Empire at Suez and the Persian Gulf. The Siberian railway, with its branches running towards the frontiers of India and to the China Sea, threatened the British Far East. Economical, tight little expeditionary corps were no longer sufficient. This was a harbinger of the industrial cyclone that was soon to break over the gigantic, loosely integrated British Empire, sprawling over the five continents.

"Powerful industrialized States arose—the United States, Germany, France, Russia, Japan and Italy, and took from Britain control of the seas adjoining their territories. The United States and Germany became rivals in world trade. In the First World War Germany made a formidable bid for the hegemony of Europe, and only the help of the United States staved off disaster threatening England and France.

"After the First World War England's difficulties progressively increased. Her five hundred million people and thirteen million square miles of territory made the Empire look impressive. But, reduced to practical military value, the whole top-heavy structure rested on forty-five million Britishers and less than twenty-five million in the Dominions. A tight little island, thousands of miles removed from its sources of food and raw materials, held the main nerve centres of the Empire. Only a few score miles away England faced a formidable bloc of seventy million Germans, with a superior military and industrial production. On the Mediterranean there were more than forty-five million land-starved Italians. In Central Asia another bloc of more than one hundred and fifty million Russians had it in their power to move against the feebly defended frontiers of India and countries adjoining the Persian Gulf. In the Far East was another formidable bloc of eighty million Japanese, not to count the vast potential forces of awakening China and revolu-  
 And

the new, better organized industrial machine of the United States, with three times the population of Britain, was spreading over the world."

In the face of these tremendous new forces, Britain had no alternative but to retreat. She depended on antiquated methods of balance of power, appeasement and diplomatic intrigues. But they all signally failed. Britain had to retreat all along the line. She had to retreat in the Far East, in India, in Egypt and the Middle East. The dominions began to strike a more and more independent course of action. The leadership of Europe also passed into the hands of the Axis Powers. England failed to rise to the full height of her greatness. The old attachments were too strong for her. "England's diplomats", to quote E. Culbertson once more, "missing completely the accelerating tempo of the Industrial Revolution, were still more excited about some obscure palace revolution in minuscule Balkan States than about the tremendous vistas opened up for her over-populated island. There were the vast tablelands of Africa to be colonized, enough for fifty million Britishers; Australia to be industrialized for the markets of the Orient; Canada to be brought into bigger play; India to be liberated, helped and reorganized as a powerful friend and an equal member of the Empire. But England never wholeheartedly gave up the petty eighteenth century mercantilistic policy that lost her the American colonies. Throughout the Empire the dominating policy was not to create strong, healthy communities but immediate dividends for the city of London".

In the summer of 1940, she stood within an inch of annihilation. The grim determination of her people, steeled by the indomitable will of their leader, was to a very great extent responsible for warding off the impending doom but she was saved mainly by a fortuitous combination of circumstances. Due to a wrong calculation, or perhaps under the pressure of some 'historic necessity', the Fuhrer failed to mop up the little island on the west of the continent which almost lay within his grasp and moved on towards the broken peninsula of the Balkans and the sprawling plains of Russia. That moment the tide

of the war turned. Powerful allies gradually came over to the side of England. She marched from one victory to another. The end of the war found her armies triumphant, her courage unbeaten, her prestige high all over the world. But many people think that though she has won the war, she may not be able to reap the full harvests of peace. She has already lost the command of the oceans, both Atlantic and the Pacific, to America. Her military control over the Middle East is constantly being threatened by Russia. The internal structure of her Empire, from India to South Africa, is all ablaze with popular insurrections. Her distant dominions like Australia and Canada are no longer attached to her by needs of self-defence. Even for feeding her population, she has to depend on other countries.

Under these circumstances, it will not be possible for England to keep India for a long time under her control. It is true that she is making frantic efforts to maintain herself as a first-class power. The idea of evolving a British-West European federation was a part of that effort. As early as July 28, 1943, the London *Times* had significantly suggested that "in certain areas of Europe where British interests are regarded as predominant, the ultimate decisions will rest with Britain....." Towards the end of the year, General Smuts spoke out rather bluntly that Britain should seek to bring up the standard of its power more nearly to the level of that of Russia and the United States by entering into closer relations with the Western Democracies of Europe. "There is much to be said for such a policy," wrote the London *Economist*, January 8, 1944, while commending the proposal. The plan, however, did not materialise. It aroused the suspicions of both Russia and the United States of America. But the real opposition came from within. The Scandinavian States were not willing to form such an alliance unless the U. S. A. was a member. Von Kleffens, speaking on behalf of Holland, suggested a widening of the plan so as to convert it into a strong formation—with America, Canada and the other British dominions as the arsenal and vast reservoir of power, with England as the base, specially for

air power, and the vast hinterland of the European mainland — as the bridgehead. "Most of the other countries showed themselves equally determined not to enter a bloc which might be hostile to the Soviet Union. The greatest opposition came from France. She refused to be drawn into any arrangement that suggested the subordination of her military power and foreign policy or colonial responsibilities to those of Great Britain. Failing in her efforts to forge out a *western bloc*, Britain has now earnestly taken up the problem of improving her relations with the imperial possessions. The policy is being vigorously followed since the advent of the labour ministry to office. The friendly tour of the Parliamentary delegation, the generous release of I. N. A. leaders and the visit of the Cabinet Mission are indications of the fact that the British Government is now earnest about implementing her long out-standing promises of giving responsible government to India. If they fail to do this, they may be left with no alternative but to follow the path of which Churchill has recently made himself the prophet, namely to fall into an Anglo-American Union, which would virtually mean a conversion of Britain into one of the States of the American Union, a path which very few Englishmen would care to follow as long as any other was open to them.

The British government may be in dead earnest, and yet fail in finding a suitable clue to the jig-saw puzzle of the Indian constitutional problem. The communal difficulties may prove insuperable. We have traced in the earlier paragraphs how the nationalist sentiment which has first grown as a middle class search for jobs has now become the religion and the battle cry of the man-of-the-street, too powerful a feeling to be ignored or trifled with. But, together with nationalism, communalism also has grown in our country at a terrific speed, and whenever nationalism has been on the point of achieving something tangible, it has always been rudely pushed back by the gushing tide of communalism. The Hindu-Muslim unity of the early twenties, when the Congress and the Khilafat worked hand in hand and when the Ali brothers rivalled

with Gandhi in the popular esteem, seems to be like a dream-like memory. Some fifteen thousand Muslims were reported to have gone to jail in the Civil Disobedience Campaigns of 1930 and 1932, but the communal forces were becoming stronger and stronger. Even the nationalist Muslims were raising their separate organizations instead of joining the Congress. The elections of 1937 gave some occasion for hope. They symbolised the triumph of progressive forces everywhere. In most of the provinces, the Congress won. In Punjab and Bengal, the Unionist Party and the *Krishak-Praja* Party routed the reactionary League. In the United Provinces, the League, which was comparatively a progressive force, won against the Nawab of Chhatari and his reactionary band of supporters. In the Frontier Province, the Congress won. In Sind also, the League failed to form its ministry. Various progressive forces appeared to be drawn together. But once the Congress formed its ministry, all the tendencies of cooperation and progressiveness seemed to dissolve into thin air, and reactionary forces, under the garb of communalism, began to gather strength. When the pressure of international situation forced the Congress to give up ministries, the Muslim League gave expression to the sense of joy and relief by celebrating a 'Day of Deliverance'! Gradually, it moved on towards the goal of Pakistan and a partition of the country. Even the grim determination to achieve freedom which the people displayed in the spontaneous risings of 1942, failed to draw the Muslim rank and file from its royal path of political inaction. The Muslim masses were 'anxious to take part in the movement, but the instructions they received from their leaders went against their natural inclinations. This was a splendid example of discipline, but when the storm subsided and the country gradually returned to normalcy, people who had suffered for the sake of freedom naturally began to ask whether this had not amounted to an act of betrayal and treachery towards the country.

The communal problem has very much complicated our fight with British imperialism. It has now become a triangular fight. The more we try to free ourselves from the

alien domination the more we find ourselves caught in the meshes of communalism. One of the main reasons why the Congress had accepted to work the constitution in 1937 was that it wanted gradually to democratize the machinery of government by bringing greater and greater pressure to bear on the foreign rulers. But the Muslim League was able to arouse so much of communal passion and bitterness during the twenty-seven months of office acceptance by the Congress that it became impossible for the latter to throw the entire weight of the country against the foreign administration. After the Congress had renounced office, the Muslim League, which claimed to be the sole leader of the Muslim masses, expressed, on various occasions, its willingness to take part in the administration. With the Congress in opposition, the British Government was forced to support the Muslim League. The British Government did not allow the Muslim League to approach anywhere near the Central administration, but supported it openly in the provinces. It pulled down the existing ministries and helped the Muslim League to replace them by its own ministries. The way in which the premiers of Sind and Bengal—Allah Bux and Fazlul Haq—were set aside, and replaced by Sir Hidayatulla and Sir Nazimuddin, is a standing scandal in the history of the working of Provincial Autonomy in India. On the other hand, the spirit of discontent was growing all over the country. Gandhiji tried to canalize the hatred for the alien rulers into constructive activities. But when three years of contemptuous indifference to national demands brought in their wake the humiliating Cripps Proposals of March 1942, it became impossible even for him to check the surging anger of the people. Gandhiji knew that the Muslims as a whole were not with the national movement, but he also knew that as long as we did not completely shake ourselves free from foreign control, the communal problem would remain incapable of solution. Gandhiji reached the same conclusion two years later also, after his twenty-one days' heart-to-heart talk with the Qaide-Azam of the League. The plunge had, therefore, to be taken.

In the meantime, the demand for Pakistan began to be formulated. Rising from the level of cheap sentimentalism, it became the national demand of a very large section of the Indian people. Having been adopted by the Muslim League as its goal, Pakistan soon became the revolutionary slogan of the Muslim masses. Thousands of Muslims found in it the symbol of their deepest cravings, and began to feel with all their heart and soul that Pakistan alone could be the ultimate goal of the Indian Muslims. They forgot that it was merely a cry of desperation, that it was an attractive way out of the stern political realities of the present—but that it ended in a world of make-belief, wild irrationality and merciless fanaticism. The Congress was down and out. The British Government was committed to an all-out support of the Muslim League. The world was torn with the bloodiest war of all times. The fascist irrationalism, by sheer force of will and desperation, seemed to have reached its peak of triumph. Mr. Jinnah, the efficient dictator of the League, made full use of the situation and spread the message of Pakistan far and wide in the country. Propaganda through press and platform, persuasion, political power, all were ruthlessly used for the propagation of the Pakistan ideal. The Muslim middle classes, restrained by their leaders from anti-British action and yet anxious to play their part somewhere, burning with the Nietzschean joy of plunging into struggle, seething with the Bergsonian craving to use all their "intelligence" for what they considered as "life-force" but which was in reality a "myth", took up the demand of Pakistan and infused it with a new passion. There is no gainsaying the fact that the last four or five years have witnessed a tremendous political awakening, if not political education, in the Muslim community and that this awakening has mostly found expression in the Pakistan demand.

The idea that the communal problem in our country is the creation of the British Government is now almost as old as the hills. Its truth cannot be denied. The fact that the British government adopted a policy of creating divisions in the country for the sake of perpetuating their



administration is no longer open to discussion. There is overwhelming evidence to establish it. If the British try to dispute it they will be displaying either rank hypocrisy or crass stupidity. Every foreign government does it. Pakistan is only the lengthened shadow of separate electorates. The seeds sown by the British government in 1909 bore their full fruits in 1939. Amery's government chuckled over the phenomenon. The pretext of political disunity in the country came handy to lull foreign interest in Indian political problems. The British policy during the War was responsible for converting the idea of Pakistan into a Frankenstein. It has now become too strong for the British to suppress it. It is only now that the British have begun to realize—or perhaps they have not yet begun to realize—that the complacency and the self-confidence with which they allowed communal fanaticism to grow stronger in India were both a misplaced complacency and a shortsighted self-confidence. Under the hope that political unity would never be achieved in India, as long as the strings continued to be cleverly pulled from Whitehall, they made all sorts of promises to meet the demands of Indian nationalism. It was mostly a part of world-propaganda. The British government thought it to be a very clever propaganda. For the time being it succeeded. The world opinion was kept quiescent. But the Indian people naturally took these declarations very seriously. The first reaction of the war was that the hated federalism of the 1935 Act was winded up. It could be opened only if the Indian people wished it, and there was a dead certainty that the Indian people would never wish to open it. A suggestion was made that the Indian political parties, only if they united, could take up the central executive machinery in their hands. Cripps suggested that the Indians could look forward to dominion autonomy with full right to secession, a right not free from ambiguity in the case of dominions too, only if the war were over. The British statesmen repeated from time to time that they were willing to transfer full responsible government to the Indians, only if they were determined to take it.

The war-time policy of the British government towards India, shortsighted as it was even from the point of view of sheer self-interest, strengthened the forces of both communalism and nationalism. The end of the war has seen the British imperial power in full retreat everywhere, in face of the two super-States of U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. marching headlong towards world-domination. The British government, now, finds itself under the dire necessity of patching up a truce with Indian nationalism. With the relaxation of war-time stringency of control, the Indian nationalism is now manifesting itself in an unprecedented exuberance of emotions. It may become difficult for the British government to satisfy it. But the very efforts it makes to meet the demands of Indian nationalism may lead to a further flare-up of communal fanaticism. Mr. Jinnah is already threatening a revolt, if the British government adheres to the very reasonable plan of a single constitution-making body for the whole of India. Those who sowed the wind should now be prepared to face the whirlwind. It is for the British Government to evolve a formula to meet the extraordinary situation, which is largely their own creation. If they fail, so much the worse for them. But, I submit, the weakening of the imperialist arm of the triangle has now brought the two other arms, communalism and nationalism, into a closer confrontation with each other. Our responsibilities have now become much greater. Need for statesmanship was never more urgent. The national leadership can no longer afford to throw the responsibility of solving the communal problem on the shoulders of the British government. It has got to face the problem squarely, and find out ways and means of permanently solving it. Many of our national leaders, on their release from the British jails last year, said that 1945 was not 1942. But some of them still appear to be measuring everything with the yardstick of 1942. Those who did not join the 1942 'movement', whether they were individuals like C. Rajagopalachariar, Bhulabhai Desai or K.M.Munshi, or public bodies like the Muslim League and the Communists—even granting that they were genuinely mistaken in their

convictions—cannot simply on account of this be considered as renegades. We cannot any longer afford to be intolerant. Our ranks have got to be closed, if we have to march towards our destiny. Instead of indulging in mutual bickerings, we have to enter into the psychology of our problems and try to smoothen them out by sympathy and constructive statesmanship.

The demand for partition has exhibited not only the extent to which the fanaticism of a minority community can go but also the depth of the bitterness of Muslim attitude towards the Hindus. There is a crying need today for a full understanding of the causes of this bitterness, for a whole-hearted acceptance of the just demands of the Muslims and for forging strong constitutional sanctions in order to allay their unjust fears. Democracy, in fact, is based on mutual sympathy and the capacity to understand each other's point of view. We, who are anxious to establish a democratic system of government in this country, ought to consider ourselves duty-bound to go into the psychology of the Muslim demands. Pakistan may be unhealthy and dangerous like an open ulcer, but it is certainly born out of a diseased political condition. Why are the Muslims so keen about the Pakistan demand, and why are they becoming keener? What are the forces, political, economic and cultural, that are working behind this keenness and sharpening it? It is necessary for us to be acquainted with those forces if we are at all anxious to establish a democratic government based on the conception of Indian unity. For this, we will have to make a study of the historical background. Did the Hindu and the Muslim societies ever remain at daggers-drawn against each other as they seem to be today. or were they ever able to cultivate mutual understanding? To what extent this mutual understanding had been made possible, and why could it not be maintained for long? What were the causes which side-tracked these two great cultures from the path of a glorious synthesis? How far was the shrewdness of an alien administration responsible for this spirit of separatism, and how far was it the outcome of our own social

drawbacks? The Muslim demand of Pakistan has compelled us to think deeply and furiously in order to find out scientific answers to all these questions.

There are some who are so disgusted with the general Muslim attitude towards the national movement that they have almost despaired of receiving their political cooperation. They want to make the national movement itself so strong as to be able to wrest power, even without Muslim cooperation, from the unwilling hands of the British. This psychology is even more dangerous than the one which gave birth to Pakistan. If Pakistan is the cry of desperation, such an idea is the very expression of madness. The greatest weakness of our national movement, as we shall find in the subsequent pages, has been that due to certain historical circumstances, it has not been able to draw upon the full support of the great Muslim community. It was therefore, natural for it to become steeped in the Hindu culture. Later on, when the political consciousness affected the Muslims, it became very difficult, on the one hand, for the national movement to change its entire complexion, and, on the other, for the Muslims, who had been engaged for a long time in a fanatic attempt at religious revivalism, to adjust themselves very easily to this form of nationalism. The third party was naturally busy in widening the gulf. But one thing which the Muslims have to understand very clearly is that, in view of the tremendous geographical and historical forces working for unity and the depth of cultural synthesis the two communities had reached, it will be impossible for the Muslim society of this country to cut itself away from the mainsprings of Indian life. Such an attempt will not only be impossible of achievement but definitely suicidal for the Muslims. They are too closely rooted to the soil. On the other hand, we should also not forget that it can never be healthy for us to allow a living part of our body, the flesh of our flesh and the soul of our soul, the Indian Muslims, who have been an integral part of our society and who have made tremendous contributions to our culture—in fact, without whose cooperation we could not have built up this great



state, is also gathering strength. Secondly, democracy does not mean that the majority community has a right by sheer force of number, to keep down the minority communities. Democracy, as defined by Abraham Lincoln is the 'Government of the People, by the People, for the People.' It is significant that Lincoln spoke of 'Government by the People', not of 'Government by the Majority'. The Government by one community over another may be called by any other name but has no right to be called democracy. Democracy, again, is 'Government for the People'. 'Government for the People' must mean government in the interest of the whole people, and not in the interest of any privileged class or section. In the words of Reginald Lennard. 'The majority, in reaching decisions, must always remember that the minority is also a part of the people. It must treat them with consideration. It must not press its own views to the point of outraging the minority. In short, the majority must exercise the faculty which we call 'political sense', that is to say, it must do nothing which will destroy, or even seriously impair, the will of the minority to remain fellow citizens of the majority, but always act in such a way that the fundamental agreement which underlies all differences will be preserved". Finally, to think of the Muslims of India as a minority in the commonly-accepted term is to reduce political terminology to absurdity. The Muslims in India are ninety million strong—twice the population of Great Britain and nine times the population of Canada. They have their own culture and civilization, dress and diet, language and manners. If there had been some practical difficulties and some weighty theoretical considerations, they could have been easily accepted as entitled to a separate nation-state. To treat such a large community as a mere minority will be to go against the spirit of democracy, if not against its form. Our political problem is, indeed, a serious problem.

No constitutional scheme, however, will be won on the paper on which it is written unless the British Government decides completely to withdraw itself from the Indian scene. I know that there is a section of people

the country which believes that the British will never concede freedom to India. Freedom, in fact, has never been given by one country to another. But which country in history has succeeded in withholding the freedom of another? All the might and majority of the Spanish Empire failed to keep down the Dutch patriots from proclaiming the freedom of their land. France and the U.S.A. both got out of the clutches of British domination and took their places as first rank powers in the world. Italy and Germany overthrew the Austrian rule over them and became the masters of their own destiny. The empires of Turkey and Russia were brought down in the first world-war. Germany, Italy and Japan have been disgorged of their imperial possessions in the second. Freedom travels along strange and devious paths. There is a storm of political circumstances and then a nation which felt itself to be in the deepest mire of slavery, suddenly wakes up and finds that its fetters have gone and that it is as free as a bird! The growth of nationalist movement inside the country, the direction of international events and the weakness of the imperial power are some of the factors which bring into existence such an array of historical forces. The pressure of circumstances today, undoubtedly, is in India's favour. India cannot be kept in thralldom any longer. Freedom is almost within her grasp. The only fear today is that it may not find us prepared to receive it. The present work claims to be an humble attempt in the direction of such a preparation. And even if the dusky banners of freedom that seem dimly to shine on the distant horizon prove to be mere figments of imagination and the sound of its marching columns but a passing fancy, and it becomes necessary for our country to pass through a greater and a grimmer struggle for freedom, I hope, this analysis of our political problems, will help us in deciding our future steps.

**PART I**

**THE PROBLEM : HINDU-MUSLIM RELATIONS**





## CHAPTER ONE

# Hindu-Muslim Relations : Historical Back-ground.

### EARLY CONTACTS

The Hindu India came in contact with Islam long before she was actually invaded by the Muslims. The Arabs had been carrying on a brisk trade with South India for centuries before the origin of Islam. They continued this trade even after they had accepted Islam. India, the traditional land of religious toleration and hospitability, continued to give them shelter. In South India we find a number of mosques constructed by them for carrying on their religious worship.<sup>1</sup> A number of Muslims were employed in high offices under the Hindu rulers of South India. Taqiuddin rose to the position of a minister

1. Masudi, who came to South India in the early part of the tenth century, found ten thousand Muslims settled in a single town of Malabar. Abu Dulaf Muhallil, Ibn Said and Marco Polo also have given similar accounts. Ibn Batuta, in the fourteenth century, found the entire coast inhabited with Muslims. He has described the existence of Muslim localities and mosques at different places.

Elliot and Dowson : *The History of India as told by its own Historians*. Vol. I.

Logan : *Malabar*. p. 245.

under Sundar Pandya, and was succeeded in that post by his son and grandson in turn.<sup>1</sup> Malik Kafur in his invasion of South India was opposed by 20,000 Muslims who fought on the side of Vir Ballal.<sup>2</sup> Caliph Omar was of opinion that India was not the land which the Mohammedans should conquer; as the people here were gentle and tolerant enough to allow the Muslims to offer their prayers in their own way.

However, this serenity of relations between the Hindus and the Muslims was seriously disturbed when the Muslim rulers of Ghazni and Ghor finally decided, not for religious proselytisation but for other purposes, on the conquest of India.<sup>3</sup> The Islam which came in their wake was lustful and ferocious, very different from the Islam that the peaceful Arab traders had brought to the South. In fact, it was also very different from the Islam which the Prophet had preached. Several centuries divided the Islam which came to India from the Prophet and his devout successors, the earlier Caliphs. There were the Omayyad and the Abbaside periods of Islamic history which stood in between. During these centuries, Islam had been thoroughly metamorphosed by contacts with the highly civilized and materialistic Persians and the barbaric Mongols: the one imparted religious

1. Elliot and Dowson : *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. III.

2. Ibn Batuta has mentioned this fact.

3. Habib : *Mahmud of Ghazni*.

fanaticism, the other ferocity of action. It was a very different kind of Islam, fanatic, merciless, ferocious, barbaric, which came to India in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Before this stormy invasion, Hindu India bowed down, in deep disdain, and let its thunderous legions past. The hordes of invaders, Turks and Tartars, Mongols and Persians, swept over the country. But, within a few years, things seemed to be settling down. When the storm was over, the Muslims found themselves scattered all over Northern India, like islands dotted over a vast sea, at Ghazni and Sindh, Delhi and Gwalior, and in the distant town of Nadia in Bengal. They had to work as a team, and, under the excellent guidance given to them by Iltutmish, they were able to coordinate not only their widely scattered settlements but also the various elements, the State, the secular nobility, the religious Ulemas and the Muslim population. The Hindus, politically weak and disunited, but, on the religious and social planes closely-knit and properly organized, offered resistance everywhere. Though vanquished in military combat, they raised insuperable barriers in matters of social contact. The new rulers were to be treated as *mléchhas*, pariahs, with whom inter-marriages and inter-dining were taboo. For once in its history, Islam though victorious politically, failed to touch the social fabric of a country it had conquered. For once, Hinduism, ever vibrant and vigorous, had dropped its aggressive role, had withdrawn itself into the cell of isolation and had completely failed.

to 'assimilate' a people with whom it had come in contact. This, indeed, was a curious phenomenon in the history of the two great religious systems of the world.

### SOCIOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS

Such a situation, by its very nature, could not have lasted for ever. The early waves of Muslim invasions soon exhausted themselves. The contact with the outside Muslim world slackened. The policy of establishing a very close alliance between religion and politics, and of giving a privileged position in the state to the Muslims, which Iltutmish had so dexterously evolved and which alone was responsible for this tiny group of Muslim islands not being sub-merged in the Hindu ocean, had to be given up immediately after his death. Balban hardly thought of that. Alauddin Khilji announced a separation of religion from politics, a policy which was perfected by Muhammad Tughlak. On the sociological plane, the Muslims allowed themselves to be completely merged. The reason was clear. The Muslim conquerors of India were not men who had borne aloft the flag of Islam under the leadership of the Prophet and the early Caliphs to the distant parts of the world, men whose souls were aflame with a great ideal. They were on the other hand, a medley of various ethnological groups. All that they had was pride of conquest—but this could not have lasted for ever. For sometime they stood face to face with the teeming millions of this country. But

gradually the process of unification began. The Muslims soon adjusted themselves to the social pattern which the people of India had raised during a long period of history. They adopted the village economy, the caste system and various other Indian practices—in fact, the whole Hindu doctrine of services and functions. Even the Mohammedan law was modified to a certain extent.<sup>1</sup>

A remarkable feature of the early phase of Hindu-Muslim contact is that the Muslims (1) neither tried to break down the Hindu social pattern, (2) nor did they try to raise another social pattern of their own. They allowed the Hindu institutions to exist, and, in course of time, adopted most of them. Gradually, a new society grew under the aegis of the village economy. In the towns, the people organized themselves on the basis of guilds, and associations, but there also the Hindus and the Muslims were interwoven by relations of trade and commerce, and though the Muslims occupied, for sometime, a privileged position in the state, the number of Hindu officers also gradually began to increase and they all worked hand in hand in a spirit of companionship and co-operation. In fact, the only thing which divided the Muslims from the Hindus was their religious faith, but religion gradually became a personal matter, and on the social plane all differences were obliterated. The Hindus and the Muslims participated in each other's fairs

1. B.K.Mallik : *Individual and the Group : A Study in Indian Conflict*.

and festivals. They observed their own social customs to a certain extent, but this was no bar to their union in different walks of life.

I do not mean to say that the Hindu-Muslim relations through the ages have been an unruffled mass of serenity. There have been periods of disagreement. But disagreement itself is sometimes an index of agreement regarding fundamentals. There were periods when the Muslim state showed a tendency to turn into a theocracy, and they were generally accompanied, preceded, or immediately followed, by periods of Hindu intransigence. The Ulemas throughout kept an attitude of hatred for the unbeliever, and could, on certain occasions, influence the State policy too. But the fact cannot be disposed of, by any serious student of Indian history or politics, that for long centuries there has been no serious clash between the Hindus and the Muslims to endanger and imperil their joint life in the village community. For all practical purposes, they lived together as one people exactly, as for instance, the Protestants and the Catholics did in European society.

### RELIGIOUS RAPPROCHEMENT

In the wake of this sociological synthesis, there came a religious rapprochement. At first sight it appears that there is nothing similar between the idol-worshipping Hinduism and the iconoclastic Islam. But already the teachers of Hindu Vedanta had spread themselves, in the Muslim countries and many scholars think

that the rise of Sufism can be traced back to their teachings, though the principles of Sufism can be found even in the Holy Quran. Sufism, in its own turn, brought about a metamorphosis in the Hindu metaphysics. The *advaitavada* (monism) of Shankaracharya was gradually modified into the *vishishtadvaita* (qualified monism) of Ramanujacharya and finally blossomed out into the *dvaitavada* (dualism) of Vallabhacharya. This certainly was influenced to a great extent by Islamic metaphysics. The evolution of the Bhakti movement out of this dualism under a more direct and concentrated influence of Sufism was merely a matter of time. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a number of saints, like Nanak, Kabir and Dadu, tried to evolve a religion which contained the quintessence of both Hinduism and Islam.

For two or three centuries, the country vibrated with the thrill and the devotion of emotion. The Bhakti movement in Hinduism and the Sufism in Islam, both movements of heart, did much to create a sympathy, and a sense of understanding, for each other's point of view. Hindu saints, Gyaneshwar, Tukaram, Chaitanya, laid emphasis on the same principles on which the Chishtia, the Suhrawardia, the Naqshabandi and other Sufic orders were laying in Islam. But below the level of higher metaphysics and every day religious doctrines, the similarity was much more complete in superstition and ceremony. A large mass of Muslims were converts from the lower classes of



Hinduism, and though they professed the monotheistic Islam, they carried on the same practices and superstitions which they had observed before. In many cases, both the Hindu and the Muslim masses paid homage to the same saints, and carried oblations to the same shrines. It was Arya Samaj in the later part of the nineteenth century which was responsible to a very great extent for weaning away the Hindu masses from such practices.

### POLITICAL AGREEMENT

The political agreement was bound to grow out of this unity of heart. Under the influence of this movement of religious rapprochement, we find that the Islamic state in India underwent a great change. I do not say it to startle my readers, but to state a historical fact that throughout the Muslim period of Indian history, there were only two Muslim rulers, Firoz Tughlak and Aurangzeb, who followed, for short durations and under the pressure of strong contemporary forces, a policy of religious persecution. The rest of the rulers and even these two rulers in the rest of their periods of administration, followed a policy of religious neutrality. Some favoured Islam, but did not disfavour Hinduism. Long before Akbar, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir was already reputed for a policy of religious toleration. He had repealed the *jazia*, and translated several Sanskrit works into Persian. Alauddin Husain Shah of Gaur played a similar role in Bengal. Sher Shah granted *wakfs* to his Hindu subjects. The whole movement

took rapid strides under the great leadership of Emperor Akbar. Under the great Mughals, the entire administration was organized on lines which were more Indian than Saracenic or Persian or Islamic. The institutions were slightly modified but they remained fundamentally unshaken. The policy of religious toleration became the creed of the Muslim state in India.

It was on account of its policy of religious toleration that the Muslim state became so popular in the masses that long after the downfall of the Mughal Empire there were attempts in our country to reorganise a state under the leadership of one of the lineal descendants of the Mughal Emperors. In the so-called Mutiny of 1857, all the Hindu and Muslim leaders made a last attempt to restore the Mughal Empire in India. This was 150 years after the collapse of that Empire. This shows what deep loyalty the Mughal Empire was able to evoke in the hearts of the Indian people. During the intervening period also, a number of events continued to happen which testify to the existence of this sentiment. Mahadaji Sindhia, who dominated Northern Indian politics from 1772 to 1794 on behalf of the Peshwa, did not feel secure in his position unless he had brought Shah Alam out of British captivity and seated him on the throne of Delhi. Shah Alam continued to be acknowledged as Shahanshah-i-Alam, the Emperor of India, in defiance of all Islamic canons, even after he had been blinded by Ghulam Qadir. Whenever the Marathas thought of establishing an

all-India hegemony, they always thought of doing so in the name of the Mughals.

Right from the early Muslim conquest of India down to the period when the British Empire had become well-established, for about nine hundred years of contact between the two communities, though there were dynastic quarrels and political squabbles, there was never a communal fracas between the Hindus and the Muslims. The incident of Malik Kafur being opposed by 20000 Muslims under Vir Ballal has already been mentioned. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a triangular contest went on, in Central India, between Gujrat, Mewar and Malwa, during which the Sultans of Gujrat combined almost as many times with the Rana of Mewar against the Sultan of Malwa as with the Sultan of Malwa against Mewar. Babar and Humayun collaborated with the Rajputs as against the Afghans. In the new realignment of forces after the collapse of the Mughal Empire, the Nizam was more a protege of the Maratha State than of Mysore, and the Rajputs were more *bonhomie* with the Rohillás than with the Marathas. In fact, till the recent outbreaks of Hindu-Muslim riots, Hindus and Muslims had never stood against each other on the battle-field on religious or communal grounds.

### CULTURAL INTEGRATION

In the wake of political union, there came a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim cultures. The process had started with the evolution of a

common language. Hindi was the outcome of Brijbhasha impregnated with Persian. The conjugations, the syntax, the vocabulary, are joint heritage of both the languages. Both Hindu and Muslim writers went to enrich it. Amir Khusru wrote as fluently in Hindi as in Persian. Akbar patronized it. Abdul Rahim Khankhana, Raskhan and Malik Mohammad Jayasi are outstanding names in Hindi literature. Jayasi is one of the three greatest poets of medieval Hindi and in certain parts he rises to an even higher poetic level than Tulsidas or Surdas. Other provincial languages too, Marathi, Bengali, Gujrati, Sindhi etc. were developed jointly by the Hindus and the Musalmans. Marathi developed to a literary status under the patronage of the Bahmani Kings. Bengali too grew under the aegis of the Muslim conquest of India. No less a writer than Dinesh Chandra Sen thinks that "if the Hindu Kings had continued to enjoy independence (because of their preference for Sanskrit) Bengali would scarcely have got an opportunity to find its way to the court of Kings."<sup>1</sup>

But nowhere do we find the synthesis so deep as in the domain of architecture. The Muslim rule in India has left behind it a vast legacy of monumental works of architecture and painting. India, in fact, is the classical land of Muhammadan architecture. The style of the Cairo mosques, writes Franz Pasha, "fails

1. Dinesh Chandra Sen : *History of Bengali Literature*.

to give entire aesthetic satisfaction. Want of symmetry of plan, poverty of articulation, insufficiency of plastic decoration and an incongruous mingling of wood and stone are the imperfections which strike most northern critics." The same criticism is true of Saracenic art in Persia. There too we find the same magnificent decoration and absence of scientific craftsmanship. Most Saracenic buildings outside India suffer from the massing of structural form only in one direction, that pointing to Mecca. The Persian craftsmen specialised in constructing the great semi-domed portal, but the entrance of Taj Mausoleum or the Buland Darwaza of Sikri can be favourably compared with the best of Persian examples. The great semi-domed portal in Persia looks more like a temporary screen put up to make a display of gorgeous colour rather than a part of the building itself. The only things the Indian craftsmen freely borrowed from the outside Muslim countries were the stalactite pendentives and similar structural or ornamental devices, but they too were perfectly adjusted to India to the general scheme of things. In Alhambra, in Spain, the pendentives and the soffit arches are overlaid with ornaments in such a way as to destroy entirely the appearance of strength and stability,

The Taj is *par excellence* the best example of Muslim architecture in India. At first sight it appears foreign to the whole Indian conception of architecture. It is unlike any other building in India. But it is also unlike any other Sara-

cenic building in the world. And it adheres more closely to the canons of the Hindu Shilpa Shastras than any other Muslim building in India. It has got a good all-round design. The arrangement of the roofing—one large dome and five small cupolas—conforms to the idea of *panch-ratna* (and the only other roofing arrangement with which it can be compared is the Hindu shrine of Chandi Sewa at Java). The curve of the central dome, unlike the single unbroken stilted Arab dome, consists of three marked divisions—(i) the incurving at the base suggesting a lotus flower holding the dome within its unfolded petals, (ii) the main structure, and (iii) the pinnacle—not rising abruptly from the crown but connected with the centre of the dome by another lotus-like member which has the petals turned downwards instead of up-wards. In fact, as Havell puts it, "Taj Mahal is more Indian than St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey are English."

But it would be wrong to say that the Muslim art in India is great only because it was designed by Hindu craftsmen steeped in Hindu symbolism. Havell is far from being correct when he says that the Hindus were as great to Muslims in the arts of peace as the latter were to them in the arts of war. The Muslims, when they came to India, already possessed a highly developed architecture of their own, as varied and magnificent as the contemporary architecture of Christain Europe. The Muslims who conquered India, men of Afghan, Persian

and Turkish blood, were endowed with remarkably good taste and natural talent for building. It was under them that the difficult, almost superhuman, task of synthesising two highly developed and widely divergent styles was achieved. Sir John Marshall is not wrong when he says that the Quwwatul-Islam mosque of old Delhi or the chaste and stately fabric of Taj could not have been designed but under Muslim influence.<sup>1</sup> The Muslim art in India is great because it is the consummation of the marriage of two great cultures.

In painting too, we find the same perfect fusion of the two styles. The ancient Indian painting had reached its high water-mark in the Ajanta frescoes, but the traditions of Ajanta were continued till a later period. Under the Mughals, a new school of painting developed. The Mughal artists were not unfamiliar with the traditions of the various Islamic schools of painting, of Samarkand, Herat, Ispahan, Baghdad. But the Indo-Mughal school of painting is neither a continuation of Ajanta nor of the Islamic traditions, though it combines both and evolves a new style of its own. "Upon the elasticity of Ajanta", writes Dr. Tara Chand, "were imposed the new laws of symmetry, proportion and spacing from Samarkand and Herat. To the old pomp new splendours were added, and to the old free and easy naivete of life a new sense of courtly correctness and rigid etiquette. In the result a certain amount of the energy and dynamic of both the Hindu and

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III.

the Muslim were sacrificed. and a stiff dignity was acquired, but along with it a marvellous richness of colour and subtlety of line".<sup>1</sup> Among the names of Shah Jahan's painters we find those of Kalyandas, Anup Chatar and Manohar on the one side and Mohammad Nadir Samargandi, Mir Hashim and Muhammad Faqir Allah Khan on the other. Both the Hindus and the Muslims contributed towards the evolution of a common style of painting. Some writers have exaggerated the differences between the Mughal and the Rajput paintings. In fact, the latter with slight change of subject-matter, is, in technique, merely an overflow of the former.

### THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

The Hindus and the Muslims were thus able to evolve a common outlook on life and of life. They had a common political organization and a common pattern of culture. They, of course, followed two different religions, but the two religions had become so modified through centuries of mutual contact that their practices hardly differed from each other. We find regular music being played in the *durgah* of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer and round about the place Kshitimohan Sen came across Husaini Brahmins who observe both the Ramzan fasts and the Hindu festivals.<sup>2</sup> The Malkhan Rajputs also observe practices which are prevalent in both the religions. The medieval history is full

1. Tarachand : *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 269.

2. Kshitimohan Sen : *Medieval Mysticism*.



of examples of Muslim saints seeking inspiration from Hindu *Sadhakas* and of Hindu saints taking their spiritual lessons from Musalman *faqirs*. Karim Shah of Sind was initiated by a Vaishnava Sadhu and the *mantra* given by the latter became for him 'like a revolving lamp in a dark room'. Baba Sahna, on the other hand, became the disciple of a Muslim saint and became known as Mehr Baba. Among the followers of the saints we find Hindus and Muslims both indistinguishably mixed up. The tombs of these saints are still visited by Hindus and Muslims alike. On the tomb of the famous saint and poet Shah Abdul Latif of Sind, even today countless Hindus and Muslims assemble and read out the songs of Kabir, Dadu, Nanak and Mirabai. Kshemanand in his *Manasa Mangala*, written in the seventeenth century, mentions the existence of the Quran in the bed-chamber of one of the Hindu rajas of Bengal. In *Seir-ul-Mutaqherin*, we find Ghulam Husain Khan mentioning the fact that Nawab Mir Jafar used to cross the Ganges with the entire population of the capital-city in order to participate in the *Holi* festivities. At the time of his death he sipped the water in which the image of goddess *Kiriteshwari* had been bathed. A Bengali poem, known as *Behula-Sundari*, mentions that the time of the hero's departure was fixed after the Brahmins had testified to its auspiciousness by a reference to the Quran.<sup>1</sup> The god Satyapir was commonly worshipped by both the Hindus and the Muslims of Bengal.

1. Kalikinkar Dutt: *History of the Bengal Subah*.

The serenity of this relationship was ruffled in the middle of the seventeenth century. The causes have to be clearly understood. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the liberal tendencies both in Hinduism and Islam had exhausted themselves. The depth to which the un-conventional, or, anti-conventional, movement started by Kabir and Nanak, on the one hand, and the extreme type of Bhakti movement, on the other, had sunk can well be imagined when we find that in Bengal, the word 'Vaishnavi', meaning a female devotee of Vishnu, was now being used for a public woman. A reaction against this state of affairs was bound to come. It found expression in the teachings of the Maharashtra saints, Tuka Ram, Ram Das and others, in the South, and Tulsidas in the North. These writers emphasised the value of social reform in Hinduism. This coincided with the decline of the Mughal Empire, and was energised by the growth of political ambition. Hindu social reform movements everywhere showed a tendency of growing into political upheavals. The teachings of Ramdas led to the rise of a Sivaji, anxious to establish a *Hindu-pad-padshahi*. The principles of Nanak, that harbinger of Hindu-Muslim unity, led to the militant organization of the Sikhs. The Marathas, the Bundelas, the Rajputs, the Sikhs, all aflame with a new consciousness of their religious glory, were bursting with impatience to overthrow the central political structure, which had been raised, with their own support, by the liberal and humanist

Mughal rulers, and to carve out kingdoms for themselves.

This threw the Mughal Empire on its defensive. Hinduism was becoming definitely aggressive. Two schools of thought arose in the Mughal state: the one believed in truculating to Hindu aggression, the other in resisting it. In the meantime, economic forces also were at work. The higher class of Muslims had always depended on government service. With the liberalising of the Mughal Empire, more and more Hindus began to be appointed to higher posts. The Muslims naturally felt frustrated. It was not difficult for these intellectualists to join hands with the Ulema class and raise the bogey that the Muslim State in India was proving itself inimical to Islam. A movement for converting it into a theocracy began in the time of Jahangir and came to a head in the later years of Shah Jahan's administration. The war of succession was fought on the crucial issue of orthodoxy versus liberalism. The one was represented by the able and inveterate Aurangzeb, the other by the philosopher-prince Dara. Due to sheer integrity of character and strength of will, Aurangzeb came out successful. For sometime, Aurangzeb followed the delicate policy of favouring Islam, but not antagonising Hinduism. The Benares *farmans* and other documents are indicative of this. But the tempo of Hindu opposition was daily growing. Aurangzeb, temperamentally a fanatic, had to depend more and more on orthodox support. An effort to

bring the administration into closer conformity with Islamic practices grew into a full-blooded persecution of Hinduism. *Jaziya* was revived. A ban was imposed on the construction of new temples. The thread of Hindu-Muslim collaboration was snapped.

With the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 came to an abrupt end this brief attempt by a section of Indian Muslim society to cut itself away from the main currents of life in the country. Such a move, in the very nature of things, was unnatural. The history, and traditions, of the last five hundred years could not be obliterated over-night. The attempt was as mad as that of a man standing at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna and trying to separate their two currents. With Aurangzeb's death was dissolved this section of Muslim fanatical thought. The two currents of life, the Hindu and the Muslim, once again met, and began to flow together. But the Islamic current was definitely becoming feebler. Hindu society had become charged with a new consciousness and was becoming more aggressive. Muslim society, due to loss of contact with outside world—the great Safavi empire of Persia also had collapsed in the meantime—was on the downward trek. All the same, the synthesis which had been evolved through centuries of intimacy remained unaffected. "The lessons of the immediate past", as Dr. Beni Prasad points out, "were not forgotten. The fabric of Hindu-Muslim culture built up by five centuries of conscious and unconscious

cooperation was maintained and strengthened; it had stood the severest of tests and was accepted as part of the working capital of the land. .... Religious persecution was not resumed anywhere."<sup>1</sup>

### IMPACT OF BRITISH RULE

At such a stage, the British entered the country. They had brought with them a new civilisation. Hindu society, which too had begun to show signs of decadence but had not yet become so degenerate as the Muslim, was impregnated with new ideas from the West. In the schools of Fort William, and through the efforts of men like Shelburne and Derozio, the two civilizations were brought into a closer contact. This led to the beginning of what we call the Modern Hindu Renaissance. The attitude of the Muslims towards the West was very different. They had not yet forgotten the pride of their rule over India. They found it more difficult than the Hindus to reconcile themselves with their new lot of slavery. For a long time, they stood sullen and resentful. A number of circumstances further deepened the bitterness of the Muslim attitude. The general British attitude towards the Muslims was one of haughty distrust. The fiscal policy of the East India Company which involved a deliberate extinction of the fine and the more skilled arts particularly affected the Muslims. The only source of income for the better class of Muslims, posts in army, administration and learned professions,

1. Beni Prasad: *Hindu-Muslim Questions*. p. 15.

were no longer available to them. In view of these circumstances, it was but natural that the Muslim reaction to the early British impact was different from the Hindu. Whereas the Hindus had been anxious to learn and assimilate, and had created movements like the Brahmo Samaj, the Muslims remained unaffected and hostile, and gave expression to their sullenness in movements like the Faraizi and the Wahabi, which were mainly anti-British. The typical Muslim attitude towards western culture is reflected in Mirza Abu Talib's 'History of Indian Culture under British Rule'.<sup>1</sup>

### RENAISSANCE AND REVIVALISM

Behind the various religious and social reforms, both of Hinduism and Islam, we find the spirit of revivalism very deep. Revivalism was one of the keynotes of the Brahmo Samaj founded by Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal in 1828, but it was the mainstay of the Arya Samaj founded by Dayanand Saraswati in 1875. Brahmo Samaj had put faith in the Upanishads; Arya Samaj insisted on the Vedas alone being the sole repositories of God's Own Truth. Swami Dayanand rejected the Smritis and the Puranas to the extent to which they deviated from the Vedas. He initiated the movement of reclaiming the land for the Vedic religion. India was to give up not only the death-embrace of the western civilization but also to discard the healthy intimacy which she had developed with

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed study see O'Malley's *Modern India and the West*.

the Muslim. It was like throwing the baby away with the bath ! The aggressive nature of this tendency was further accentuated by Olcott's Theosophical Society, which tried to give a scientific justification for all sorts of superstitious practices, and the various orthodox Hindu movements, manifesting themselves in the Sanatan Dharma Mahamandal and other bodies. Everywhere, the cry was for going back—back through dismal ages—to the dreams of ancient glory.

The Muslim society also was convulsed by a similar tendency. There arose a number of reactionary movements in Islam, originating in different circumstances, fostered by men of very different character and leaving their marks in quite different degrees—but all harping on the cry of going back, back to the Quran, or the Prophet, or the Hadis.<sup>1</sup> Of these, Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi tried to purge Islam of superstitious practices it had borrowed from Hinduism and restore the creed of early Islam as taught by the Prophet. Syed Ahmad of Bareilly declared India a *dar ul harb*, where *jihad* had to be waged. The movement he started was known as 'Tariqah - i - Mohammadia', or the return to the ways of the Prophet. Shah Karamat Ali of Jaunpur was not so volatile, but

1. These various movements are generally lumped together as 'Wahabi', though they have hardly got anything to do with the original Wahabi movement started by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab (1707-87) in Arabia. Most of them follow the Hanafi and the Shafii schools and expressly disclaim and even attack the Wahabi system of *tasawwuf*. It may be more correct to call them 'Back to the Quran' movements.

he also contributed greatly to winning over a large number of Muslims to orthodox practices. Haji Shariyatullah of Faridpur started the Faraizi movement, which was partly religious and partly agrarian, and incessantly preached a return to the pristine purity of Islam. Under his son, Dudhu Mian, the movement grew very much in strength and importance. The Ahli Hadis, much less important than any of the movements mentioned above, denounced polytheism, the worship of saints and such other practices which the Islamic society had imbibed in India. In Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani's teachings too, we find a strong note of revivalism.

This tendency of looking back to the past is the main characteristic of renaissance everywhere. In Europe, it was a discovery of the pre-Christian, Greek civilization which was responsible for the surging up of a new life in the sixteenth century. The tendency was, thus, quite natural in India too. When a nation is in the sloth of despondency, when it has utterly lost its faith in the present, a vision of its past greatness alone is able to kindle it to new hopes and new dreams of future. It is true that in such a case imagination sometimes becomes so strong that historical facts, floating and tossing helplessly on its tempestuous surface, get warped and twisted. In the case of the Indian renaissance, however, the tendency affected the Hindu and the Muslim communities in two different ways. It made the Hindus look back, wistfully and appreciatively, at that ancient



civilization which had grown up on the banks of the Ganges and the Jumna and in the making of which Islam had played no part. The Muslims, on the other hand, thought of their ancient civilization, which had been evolved by the Prophet and the earlier Caliphs in the desert sands of Arabia, and which had reached, and crossed, its high water-mark long before the Muslims came in contact with India. They both forgot—just as in looking at a distant landscape we sometimes forget things closer at hand—that during several centuries of their common inheritance of this land, their common sharings of joy and their common sufferings, they had evolved a great common culture, a whole background of social institutions and a heritage of metaphysics, architecture, painting, literature, of which they could both be as proud as of anything else.

### INDIAN NATIONALISM: CHARACTERISTICS

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, a national movement began to grow out of the Hindu revivalist movement. It can be traced back to the teachings of the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthna Samaj, Ram Mohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ranade, Bhandarkar, Chandavaskar, all steeped in the ancient Hindu lore. The writings of the orientalist strengthened faith in their ancient glory which had been inculcated in the minds of the Hindus by these religious leaders. They "revealed", in the words of Sir Valentine Chirol, "to India herself scarcely less

than to the Western world the majesty and wealth of the Sanskrit language as well as the literary value of the great body of Hindu literature which is the key to India's civilization."<sup>1</sup> The Arya Samaj played an important part in building up the foundations of Indian national movement. Its founder Dayanand Saraswati exercised great "nationalizing influence.....upon his followers", and was "the first man to proclaim India for Indians". The national-minded neo-Vedantists, on one side, and the Theosophical Society, Sanatan Dharma Mahamandal and other orthodox groups on the other, stand in even more direct line with the growth of Indian nationalism. The part played by Swami Vivekanand in the evolution of Indian nationalism is generally not fully realized. He was, in fact, the greatest builder of Indian Nationalism. In his gigantic personality, India's self-confidence rose to a fever-height. When he left India, in 1893, to attend the World Conference of Religions at Chicago, he had a great attraction for the West. He thought that India with her spirituality and the West with its materialism represented the two sides of life. As he went through the East Indies, China and Japan, he realized the role that India had played in the past as the spiritual leader of the world. At the Chicago Conference, "his handsome presence in oriental robes, orange and gold, his complete mastery of the English language and his impressive voice lent to his fervent, if unhistoric, vindication of

1. Sir Valentine Chirol : *India*, p. 86.

Hinduism an emotional intensity which swept his unaccustomed audience off its feet, and made the Americans hail him with astonished admiration as the inspired prophet of a wonderful creed and of an ancient civilization which had nothing to learn from western missionaries or 'western rules'.<sup>1</sup> From now a change came. Vivekanand began to denounce, every time in a stronger language, the hollowness of the western civilization and, simultaneously, his faith in the Indian civilization began to grow. "Once more", he said, on his return from America, "the world must be conquered by India.... Let them come and flood the land with their armies, never mind. Up India, and conquer the world with your spirituality."<sup>2</sup> "We must go out, we must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. There is no other alternative. We must do it or die. —The only condition of national life, once more vigorous life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought."<sup>3</sup> This has, since then, been the key-note of Indian nationalism.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, our national movement had grown almost into a religion. "A new life," writes Gurumukh Nihal Singh, "burst forth in the country in the years 1905-1909, and it gave rise to two new schools of nationalism both of which were permeated with a deep religious spirit, though

1. Valentine Chirol: *India*, pp. 96-97.

2. *From Colombo to Almora : Seventeen Lectures* by Swami Vivekanand, p. 193.

3. *Ibid.* p. 195.

each followed its own separate methods..... The leaders of both the new schools were dominated by the same spirit, they were intensely and even aggressively nationalistic, and they worked for the same goal—a free, independent India restored to its pristine purity and ancient glory and prosperity,”<sup>1</sup> This ‘pristine purity and ancient glory and prosperity’, in case of both the Extremists and the Revolutionaries, was that of Hinduism. The Indian national movement was “born of religion” and “inspired by religious revival.” The religious revival was Hindu religious revival. The leaders of the movement in all parts of the country were men with deep faith in Hindu religion—Tilak in Maharashtra, Aravinda Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal in Bengal, Lajpat Rai in Panjab. The mainspring of action in these men, and also in the leaders of the revolutionary school, like Barindra Ghosh, was religion. “After the partition of Bengal in 1905”, as Dr. Beni Prasad points out, “the extreme phase of nationalist agitation pressed the Bhagwat Gita in its service and discovered a sheet anchor in Shri Krishna’s Gospel of disinterested action, strength and heroism buttressed by right knowledge of soul and salvation. That was the quintessence of Hindu philosophy. Some nationalists, though not all, in Maharashtra found inspiration in the life of Sivaji and the renaissance that had preceded his phenomenal

1. Gurumukh Nihal Singh: *Landmarks in India's Constitutional and National Development*, p. 259.

rise to power in the seventeenth century.”<sup>1</sup>

Indian nationalism, thus, presented itself in the swathing garbs of Hindu religion. It evolved flags and songs, symbols and slogans, which are typically Hindu. *Bande Matram*, which soon became the national anthem of the country occurs in a book which, though written to inspire nationalistic sentiments in the reader, takes the background of Hindu-Muslim hostility for its plot. It is written in highly-Sanskritised Bengali and is full of Hindu religious sentiments. The country is compared to the mother and addressed as Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati. In Maharashtra, we find those heroes being invoked who had fought for the establishment of Hindu polity in opposition to the Mughal Empire. Tilak, that “dangerous pioneer of disaffection”, the first Indian political leader who was in direct touch with the masses, started anti-cow-killing societies, Ganpati festivals and Hindu *akharas* throughout Maharashtra. Their main appeal was to Hindu manhood. The beginning of political life in Maharashtra is closely associated with the celebrations of the Ganpati festivals inaugurated by Tilak. “The object”, writes Gurumukh Nihal Singh, “was to utilize the religious instincts and beliefs of the people to infuse a spirit of manliness and patriotism in them.”<sup>2</sup> “Lectures, processions, singing parties”, writes Athalye, “are the invariable accompaniment of the festival and they not

1. Beni Prasad: *Hindu-Muslim Questions*, p. 42.

2. G. N. Singh: *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development*, p. 302.

only provide an outlet to the religious zeal of the people but help in fostering the national sentiment also and in creating an interest in the outstanding questions of the day.”<sup>1</sup> The close connection between Hindu religion and Indian politics was all too clear. The Sivaji festivals too were inspired by the same spirit. The language used by Tilak was not always happy. “It was in a praiseworthy object”, he wrote of Sivaji, “that he murdered Afzal Khan for the good of others.....God has conferred on the *Mlechhas* no grant of Hindustan inscribed on imperishable brass. Shivaji tried to drive them forth out of the land of his birth.”<sup>2</sup>

In all this, there was no deliberate affront to the Muslim community. It was merely a matter of historical accident that the Hindus were the first to be influenced by those factors which brought about the growth of Indian nationalism. They were the first to receive western education and get initiated in the ideas of liberty and representative government. The wave of nationalism took some time to reach the Muslim community—as the Muslims had not only had a late start but took a longer time in covering all those stages through which the Hindu society had passed. Psychological reasons apart, there were strong historical reasons too that were responsible for the difference in the progress of the two societies. We have to remember that this wave of renaissance did not simultaneously affect all parts of the country

1. Athalye: *Life of Lokmanya Tilak*, p. 185.

2. Chirol: *Indian Unrest*, pp. 46-47.

—it spread from one province to another in the wake of the British rule. We have also not to forget that the chief centres of Islamic culture in India have always been in the north, in the Panjab, Delhi and the United Provinces. It took more than half a century for the western influences to reach these provinces. The reform movement began in Northern India when it was already at its peak in the provinces on the sea-coast. By the time that the Muslims were affected by the spirit of nationalism, it had already grown, under predominantly Hindu influences, into a powerful force. Muslims, inspired by patriotism, had no alternative but to join it. But in the meantime, the Muslims of India had passed through a period of religious revivalism similar to that experienced by the Hindus. Quite a large number of Indian Muslims, therefore, found it impossible to break themselves away from the revivalist tendencies in which they had been nurtured. A feeling arose in the minds of many that by joining the national movement they were in some way infringing upon their loyalty to Islam. It was out of a consciousness of this fear of a clash between Islam and Indian Nationalism, and the decision of many to stick to what they considered to be Islam, that the biggest of our political problems, the communal problem, arose. But in order to understand it clearly we have to go into the depth of Muslim politics and study in some details the economic, political, cultural—and, not the least, personal—influences on its various phases.

## CHAPTER TWO.

### Muslim Politics and Growth of Communalism.

Hindu-Muslim disagreement, in its process of historical growth, can be studied under three distinct phases. The first phase was inaugurated by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan by his decision to ask the Muslims to keep away from the Indian National Congress. Sir Syed, however, had a very limited success in his mission. Helped by certain political factors, he could keep away a section of the Muslims from the national politics, but in his own day his policy began to be repudiated by a growing section of progressive Muslim thinkers and after his death the communalism which he had brought into existence received a serious set-back. Nationalism still attracted the best of Muslims, Shibli Nomani, Altaf Husain Hali, Abul Kalam Azad, Mohammad Ali and, above all, the great poet-philosopher of Islam, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal. For some time, when there was a lull in Indian political life, the vision of the Muslim thinkers in India was caught in the meshes of pan-Islamism. In 1920-21, however, Muslim pan-Islamism and Hindu nationalism were brought together, and out of their unity there was generated a force which shook the British Empire in India



to its foundations. But that unity proved to be short-lived. Due to certain historical forces, Hindus and Muslims were thrown apart. Communalism once more raised its ugly hood. Riots became rampant. The atmosphere of the country completely changed. This was the period of Khwaja Hasan Nizami's *tanzeem* and *tableegh* movements and Maulana Shaukat Ali's vituperous diatribes against Hindu India. But during this period too, saner elements—Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Dr. Ansari, Maulana Azad—continued to work for a rapprochement between the two communities. This second phase of disagreement came to an end with the national struggles of 1930-32. The movement of progressive thought in Indian Islam was once more accelerated. It seems to have reached a high water-mark in 1936, when provincial elections were to be fought. With 1937 began the third, and the latest phase of Hindu-Muslim disagreement. This phase reached its climax with the Pakistan resolution of the Lahore session of the League in 1940. Communal bitterness continued to be intensive for another two years. But now we seem to be outgrowing that period too. The nationalist Muslims seem to have taken up the challenge of the Simla Conference and they mean to render a good account of themselves.<sup>1</sup>

1. Looking from the constitutional point of view, the first phase ended in 1907, with the Muslim demand for separate electorates, the second phase (1921-30) was characterized by the Muslim demand for provincial autonomy and the third phase, started in 1937, culminated in 1940, with the Muslim League demand for Pakistan.

## SIR SYED AHMAD KHAN

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) occupies the same place in the Muslim Indian Renaissance which Raja Ram Mohan Roy occupies in the Hindu. Born in a distinguished Syed family of Delhi, he was from the very beginning interested in studies and scholarship. He was a profuse writer on science, theology, history, architecture and sundry other subjects. His work on the ruins, architecture and mausoleums of Delhi—*Asar-i-Sanadial*—was translated by a French orientalist and attracted considerable notice. After the Mutiny, he wrote several comparative treatises on Islam and Christianity. He wrote a commentary on the Bible called the *Tabyin-ul-Kalam*. When Sir William Hunter's book on the Indian Musalmans was published he wrote powerful rejoinders in the *Pioneer*. In all these activities of Sir Syed, we find strong reminiscences of Ram Mohan Roy's translation of the Upanishads, the *Precepts of Jesus*, and his rejoinders to missionary attacks on Hinduism through the *Brahmanical Magazine* and the *Kaumudi*. Like the Raja, Sir Syed was a great believer in education too, particularly of the western type. He did much to draw the Muslims out of the sloth of backwardness and conservatism, and to put them on a level with the Hindus in the matter of education. The Aligarh Muslim University is a standing tribute to his great educational work for the Muslim community. It grew out of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College

which he had started in Aligarh in 1877. A few years later, he laid the foundations of the Muhammadan Educational Conference.

In all this, Sir Syed Ahmad had a clear objective before him. He had felt deeply the degeneration of the Muhammadan community, and he was burning with a desire to improve its status. Early in life he had realised that the future of India lay with the British and not with the decrepit Mughal Empire. During the Mutiny of 1857 he stood loyally by the British Government. He was distressed to find that the Mutiny had made the British more bitter towards the Muhammadans. There was a common belief among Englishmen that the Musalmans had been mainly responsible for the Mutiny.<sup>1</sup> The suppression of the Mutiny was followed by an intensification of the British hostility towards the Muslims. Hindus were rising rapidly in the scale of careerism. Sir Syed was grieved to find that the Muslims were being left behind. For some time he felt extremely dejected—he even thought of migrating to Egypt. But soon he decided to gird up his loins and take up the cause of his community in right earnest. In 1859, he wrote *Asbab-i-baghawat-i-Hind*, 'Causes of the Indian Mutiny.' His main idea in writing this was, on

1. "During and for long after the mutiny, the Mohammedans were under a cloud. To them were attributed all the horrors and calamities of the terrible time."

Graham: *Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, p. 40.

the one hand, to dispel the illusion that the Muslims were primarily responsible for the Mutiny and, on the other, to impress upon the Muslims the need for a greater appreciation of the western culture. He followed this up in 1860-61 by his book on the *Loyal Moham-medans of India*. His visit to England in 1869-70 seems to have made him a still greater admirer of the West.<sup>1</sup> The chief object of his founding the M.A.O. College was, as he himself stated in his address to Lord Lytton, "to reconcile oriental learning with western literature and science, to make the Muslims of India worthy subjects of the British Crown, to inspire in them that loyalty which springs not from servile submission to foreign rule, but from a genuine appreciation of the blessings of good government". Sir Syed Ahmad thought that "the British rule in India was the most wonderful phenomenon the world had ever seen."

While Sir Syed Ahmad was, thus, consolidating the Muslims under him into a closer alliance with the British rulers, the Hindu professional classes were going a different way. Education had given them self-confidence. Self-confidence had created an ambition for higher jobs and bigger offices, for post and power. Frustration

1. "The natives of India", he wrote in a letter from England,"....."when contrasted with the English in education, manners and uprightness are as like them as a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man."

Quoted by W. C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, p. 9.

of this ambition bred hatred for the administration that came in their way. Hatred for the foreigner accelerated the desire for freedom from his thralldom. Here was the genesis of the national movement. Once the sentiment began to grow, organizations came into existence. First, a number of provincial associations—the Indian Association of Calcutta, the Madras Mahajan Sabha, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, etc. were organised. Surendranath Banerji's all-India tour of 1877-78 did much to link up these provincial centres of political activity. Then, a number of attempts were made to establish an all-India body. They culminated in the establishment of the Indian National Congress, in 1885. The National Congress soon gathered the most active elements in the country, from all provinces and all communities, within its fold. Though initiated by an Englishman, Allan Octavian Hume, and blessed by the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, it soon became a powerful channel for the expression of fiercest criticism of the government—and fell into government disfavour, Lord Dufferin himself condemning it as 'a seditious body'.

What was Sir Syed to do now? With very great pains he had been able to organize a section of the Muslim community for loyal cooperation with the British. In this, he was never guided by any feeling of hostility towards any other community in the country. As early as 1860, he had advocated the inclusion of Indians in the legislative councils. In 1866, while advocating the foundation of the British Indian

Association, generally described as the forerunner of the Indian National Congress, he asked the people to give up fear, and frankly and honestly to tell the British what their grievances were. In 1877, when Surendranath Banerji visited Aligarh, in connection with his Civil Service agitation, Sir Syed Ahmad presided over the meeting addressed by him. He gave his hearty support to the Ilbert Bill. In 1884, while in Punjab, he spoke eloquently of the common interests of all communities and made an impassioned plea for cooperation and united action. "We (i.e. Hindus and Mohammedans)", he said, "should try to become one heart and soul, and act in union. If united, we can support each other. If not, the effect of one against the other would tend to the destruction and downfall of both." Sir Syed's patriotism was above board. Quite often he used to call Hindus and Muslims two eyes of the beautiful bride that was India. His courage also was equally undaunted. He had been a vehement critic of Lord Lytton's Punjab University Bill, and had walked out of the Agra Durbar because Indians and Britishers were not treated alike in the matter of seating arrangements. Sir Syed Ahmad was not only above communalism and cowardice, but above narrow provincialism also. He considered the Bengalis to be the pride of the country, since it was due to them that we had received our ideas of freedom and nationalism. There was every temptation for Sir Syed Ahmad to rush into the political arena of the Congress and to shoot into the all-India leader-

ship. Shibli Nomani was not wrong when he wrote that 'nature meant him to be the leader of all India.'

It is necessary to know these facts about Sir Syed Ahmad, if we want dispassionately to understand the circumstances which, again in the words of Maulana Shibli Nomani, 'made him pull the Muslims back from playing their part in the nationalist movement.' Why did it happen? Maulana Shibli has raised the question, but evaded the answer. The answer attempted by Asoka Mehta and Achyuta Patwardhan in their brilliant study of the *Communal Triangle in India* hardly seems to be adequate. Write Mehta and Patwardhan: "It was the subtle influence exercised over the ageing leader by the European Principals of the Aligarh College that was mainly responsible for the tragic change in Sir Syed Ahmad's politics. His trusting nature was cynically exploited to array him against Indian nationalism". The idea that Sir Syed Ahmad was a tool in the hands of Beck, Morrison and others, whom he himself had appointed as successive Principals of the M.A.O. College, and was being 'cynically exploited' by them, is insulting to Sir Syed Ahmad's sharp intelligence and capacity for leadership. It also exhibits a mis-understanding of the strength of historical forces, which under their torrential momentum are sometimes able to sweep the tallest of individuals off their feet. No, a strong and deep-rooted movement like the Indian communalism cannot be explained in terms of personalities. For that, we have to

break through the outer crust of historical happenings and go into the mainsprings of the national psychology, with all its interplay of forces, political and economic, cultural and religious. There too, of course, we cannot keep out the personal factor. Let us, then, repeat Maulana Shibli's query regarding Sir Syed's faith in nationalism and advocacy of communalism : "Why did it happen ? What were the reasons for it ?"

### GENESIS OF COMMUNALISM

In order to answer this question, we have, first, to unravel the forces at work behind the rise and growth of the Indian National Congress, and, then, to acquaint ourselves with the various strands of Sir Syed's own character and personality. The Congress, it may be pointed out, started as the organization of a section of the Indian people, the educated middle classes, deeply impregnated with western doctrines and clamouring for higher jobs and a share in administration. As such there was nothing communal about it, either in character or in composition. The Congress did not stand for the interests of one community as against those of another. It demanded privileges for the entire cross-section of the people, the whole advance-guard of bourgeois intelligentsia. As such it included Muslims within its ranks, just as it included Parsis, Sikhs, Indian Christians and other lesser communities. The very first session of the Congress was attended by 2 Muslims. In the second session, 33 Muslims were present,



and, in the sixth, their number had risen to 156. The third session, at Madras, was presided over by a Muslim, Hon. Mr. Badruddin Tyabji, who said in his presidential address : "I, for one, am utterly at a loss to understand why Musalmans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-countrymen.....for the common benefit of all." Ali Mohammad Bhimji, a prominent merchant of Bombay toured the country to popularize the aims and objects of the Congress. Outstanding Ulemas—Maulvi Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, Maulvi Zulfulla of Aligarh and Mulla Mohammad Murad of Muzaffarnagar—advised their co-religionists to cooperate with the Hindus in their common political uplift.

There was, thus, nothing communal about the complexion of the Congress. All the same, since it drew its membership largely from the educated middle-classes, and it was the Hindu community which had taken more quickly to education than any other community, it was predominantly a Hindu body. Already, most of the posts in the administration were being filled up by Hindus.<sup>1</sup> If the Congress was able to secure greater openings for the Indians, they would also go to the Hindu. But Sir Syed did not feel

1. "Among Indians who have acted as Chief Justices, Hindus were the first. Hindus have been the first to fill up the responsible position of Advocate-general and Standing—counsel. The same was true in the executive branch of the administration. The first Indian placed in charge of a district was a Hindu. Two Hindus have been Divisional Commissioners, but no Muslim in 1909 had reached such a position. The first Indian to enter Civil

panicky on that ground. It was another possibility which really tormented him. The Congress, in spite of its professions of offering nothing but the most loyal opposition to the Government was becoming marked for its ebullient character. Lord Dufferin was already in a sour mood. Sir Syed Ahmad feared that if the Muslims joined it in large numbers, they would lose the Government confidence which he had so dexterously, though yet partially, won for them. In view of the fact that the Government had not yet forgotten the part played by the Muslims in the Mutiny, there was every need for them to tread their path cautiously. That was exactly Sir Syed Ahmad's reason for asking the Muslims to keep out of the Congress. In his address to a gathering in Lucknow—consisting of vested interests and educated middle classes—he asked the Muslims to do so 'in order not to give rise to suspicion of disloyalty'.

Under these circumstances, it would be absurd to read into Sir Syed Ahmad's advice to the Muslims a communal meaning or to take it as the Muslim determination not to co-operate with the Hindus or, which is much worse, to interpret it as a betrayal, on the part of the Muslims as such, of the nationalist cause. Sir Syed opposed the Congress, and advised the Muslims to stay out of it 'because it was too disrespectful,

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Service was a Hindu. So was the first Indian who was qualified barrister."

K. B. Krishna: *Problem of Minorities*, p. 95.

not because it was too Hindu.' His opposition to the Congress was not the Muslim opposition to the national movement: it was the opposition of the backward section of the middle-class, standing on the dangerous precipice of insecurity, to the forward section, which now felt itself on surer grounds and thought that agitation would bring with it better jobs. It so happened—due to the hiatus in the educational level of the two communities—that the forward section was predominantly Hindu, and the backward section predominantly Muslim. "Rather than saying", writes W.C. Smith, "that the Muslim middle class was economically more backward, and more pro-British, than the Hindu middle class, it would be more accurate to say that the economically backward, pro-British middle-class was more Muslim than was the older, stronger, now fault-finding middle class." <sup>1</sup>

The establishment of the Indian National Congress had, in fact, presented a dilemma before Sir Syed Ahmad. If he joined the Congress, he would have been required to break away from the alliance with the British. That would have meant not so much the severing of personal ties but a definite breach between the British rulers and his community, a breach which he had attempted to heal up with great effort and sacrifice. If he joined the British, against the Congress, he would have been required to oppose the nationalist upsurge with which he was in almost complete agreement. Personal views and loyalty to what he

1. *Modern Islam in India*, pp. 198-99.

considered the best interests of the community pulled him in two different directions. And, like a true servant of the people, he subordinated the former and chose the latter. He decided to stand by his community, in alliance with the British, against the Indian National Congress.

Thus was communalism born, and from its very birth, it was thrown into a close alliance with the ruling power, and in direct opposition to nationalist forces. But why did Sir Syed Ahmad think on communal lines at all? Why did he place the interests of his community above the interests of the nation? Why could he not break out of his cell of communalism and walk in the wide world of nationalism? Why this narrow clinging to the interests of a section of the Indian people, a mere community? The answer would lie in the fact that it was not Sir Syed Ahmad who had created communal divisions in the country. That was the gift of her rulers. At one time, the British had adopted the policy of favouring the Hindu and suppressing the Muslim. The British had made that communal distinction. After the Mutiny, the Muslims were singled out as a community and punished. This naturally had brought about a community-sense in the Muslims. Sir Syed, with his statesman's vision, had seen, all the more after the Mutiny, that this attitude of the British had to be changed. Like a devout public worker, he had consistently worked for that, and he had also succeeded to a very great extent. We cannot

also forget that Sir Syed Ahmad was essentially a social reformer, not a political worker. All the social reform movements of the nineteenth century had been moving within the water-tight compartments of the Hindu and the Muslim societies, since they were all based on religion, the one thing that divided the Hindu from the Muslim. Sir Syed Ahmad, early in life, had taken a vow of service to the Muslim community. Naturally, if he wanted to be true to that, he had to cut out any other allegiance that came in conflict with this. Sir Syed could not have broken himself away from the roots out of which he had sprung and which were still nourishing him.

It is true that the path he chose was bound to lead him into the blind alley of communalism. Sir Syed's own career was a pointer in that direction. His love of the country and good will for other communities were remarkable. In working for the Muslim cause, he had no intention of harming any other interests. For sometime he maintained a distinction between the educational and cultural activities of the Muslims and their political work. Though believing that they had to organize their own educational and cultural institutions, he was opposed to the Muslims raising their own political institutions too. It was on this ground that he had refused in 1877 to help Amir Ali's efforts to establish a National Mohammedan Association in Calcutta. But he could not maintain himself in a no man's land for a long time. Immediately after the establishment of

the Indian National Congress, we find him organizing, in collaboration with Raja Shiv Prasad of Benares, the Indian United Patriotic Association. This had no communal basis. In 1889, however, Sir Syed became instrumental in the establishment of the Mohammedan Defence Association of Upper India. "Towards the end of his life", it is said, "Sir Syed felt the justice of the Congress demands". But it was too late for recantation.

### THE LIBERAL TREND

The entire work of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was thrown out of shape and form within a few years of his death. The reaction had already set in during his life-time.<sup>1</sup> His political conservatism seems to have made an appeal to the then timid middle class intelligentsia, hankering after government jobs. Men like Zakauulla and Mohsin-ul-Mulk, and thousands of smaller fry, whole-heartedly fell in with his policy of keeping the alien government in good humour. But Sir Syed Ahmad's religious agnosticism and social radicalism were not widely accepted. On the plane of religion, Sir Syed's role was more negative than positive. He successfully met the missionary criticism against Islam, and also tried to find out a synthesis between

1. "By the closing years of the last century", wrote Nawab Vikar-ul-Mulk, in 1907, "several of the trustees of the Aligarh College had come to feel that Sir Syed's policy needed serious correction. Many continued to adhere to him out of sheer deference to his personality, though they were strongly opposed to him in ideas "

*Vikara-i-Hayat*, p. 420.

Islam and Christianity, but he could hardly generate among his followers that passionate attachment for religion which takes the shape of fanaticism, and this at a time, when the Muslim masses, having lost everything—political power, trade and industries, even government favour—were already developing fanatical attachment to their religion.<sup>1</sup> Sir Syed's religious views, naturally, could not find much favour among his co-religionists. His smashing attack on *tagleed*, or reliance on ancient authority, evoked the widest possible resentment. He was particularly unpopular among the Ulemas, who ex-communicated, slandered and persecuted him. In fact, many people denounced him as a 'nacheri', a man who had a greater faith in reason than in religion. Nor were his ideas of social reform popular. He had denounced *purdah*, and stood for women's education. It was in the atmosphere generated by him at Aligarh that bar against re-marriage of widows was relaxed, plural marriages began to be discredited and Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, through his series of novels—*Mubtala*, *Taubat un Nusuh*, *Mirat ul Urus*, *Ibn ul Wakf*—, carried a ceaseless propaganda for the abolition of social evils in Islam.

1. "The national awakening and unrest following the British conquest first dashed itself against the armed might of the British Raj. Defeated and repulsed and severely punished, it turned to caste and religion to satisfy its hunger".

Mehta and Patwardhan: *The Communal Triangle in India*, p. 102.

The reaction against the stand taken by Sir Syed Ahmad first began in the religious sphere and found its fullest expression in the writings of Syed Amir Ali, initiated by the publication of the *Spirit of Islam* in 1891. Amir Ali's stand is the very opposite of Sir Syed's. Sir Syed had looked at Islam through rationalism, Amir Ali tried to project rationality into Islam. In fact, Amir Ali was looking at Islam through the liberal eyes of the West. He explains away the lust for war, rabid intolerance, inferiority of women's position, slavery and many evils attributed to Islam and emphasises its literary and scientific achievements, its nationalism and democratic spirit, its modernism. Amir Ali also published, in 1899, a *Short History of the Saracens* in which he dwelt at length on the ancient and noble civilization of Islam in Arabia. By his brilliant writings, reprinted again and again, with modifications, additions, alterations, Amir Ali began reconstructing the entire history of Islam, and became responsible for placing it in a modern setting. Islam now arose as a robust religion of a virile people. The Islamic social order, in the form in which it was presented to the credulous Muslim masses, was characterised by a spirit of liberality and toleration, reverence to women, incompatibility with slavery and a pioneer spirit of the brotherhood and equality of men. In this picture of a highly developed social order, the personality of its creator, the Prophet, rose as that of a true leader of men, a wonderful constructive genius gifted by a sweetness of



disposition and a nobility of character, a singular elevation of mind and extreme delicacy and refinement of feelings, unparalleled in human history. Khuda Bakhsha and others carried on the tradition of Amir Ali's writings. Khuda Bakhsha translated a number of German books, by Von Kromer and others, on Islam, in English.

Out of these writings arose a new self-confidence in Islam. It was a religion which could be loved and admired, hugged and appreciated. "Whatever the defects of this writer", writes W.C. Smith, of Amir Ali, "his chief concern and his chief contribution was to supply the new modernized Islam with modern and substantial content."<sup>1</sup> In this, he was pre-eminently successful. Sir Syed's religion was modern enough, but lacked grandeur: there was nothing very inspiring about it. Amir Ali's religion too was modern, but it had a certain grandeur and nobility about it. A Muslim now could well feel proud of belonging to a religious-social order, which was the best the world had so far evolved. He could hold his head high even when confronting the West. His Prophet and the earlier Caliphs were the finest and the noblest of men ever born. But this faith and confidence in Islam was combined with a spirit of conservatism in the social sphere. Amir Ali hardly did anything to loosen the shackles of social degeneration. Though proclaiming from house-tops that Islam revered women, the pioneers of the new movement never showed

1. *Modern Islam in India*, p. 55.

any interest in the abolition of *purdah* or the elevation of woman's position in the society of to-day. We find some of them even defending polygamy—though Amir Ali himself unequivocally condemned it. On the political plane, the advance was still slower. Amir Ali was a thorough believer in the British rule. Khuda Bakhsha as late as 1912 was wholeheartedly loyal to the Empire—it was only later that he had a temporary lapse. The position of Muslim thought was thus thoroughly reversed. Sir Syed's rational interpretation of Islam and radical approach towards social evils was replaced by a credulous apotheosis, though on a superficially rational basis, of Islam and a thorough defence and justification of its social practices. On the political plane, too, Sir Syed's blind dependence on the British was being gradually given up.

Even the close followers of Sir Syed Ahmad could not escape these new influences. Chiragh Ali and Mohsin-ul-Mulk were, of course, too hard-boiled to change. But the younger men were willing to move forward. Among these were Altaf Husain Hali, Shibli Nomani, Nazir Ahmad and others. Hali, the author of *Musaddas* and one of the few outstanding literary figures of modern Islam, felt as keenly as Sir Syed the decadence of the existing society, but unlike the Syed, he sought the remedy not in westernization but in going back to ancient Islam. Hali, with Zakaulla and Nazir Ahmad, is one of the builders of modern Urdu and could make more direct appeal to the Muslim

masses through his powerful Urdu style. He resurrected before them the glories of the ancient Islamic culture and urged upon the Muslims to revive them. Another great writer, belonging to Sir Syed Ahmad's band, who took up this work of reconstruction, was Maulana Shibli Nomani. Hali had summoned up a pride in Islam's past glories, and urged modern Muslims to emulate them. Shibli worked this out in greater detail, not only referring to that past but displaying it. He wrote, in his powerful and captivating style, a whole series of biographies of the Prophet and of other great men in the earlier Caliphate and the Abbaside periods. After giving up his principalship of the Lucknow *Nadwat ul Ulema*, where he was appointed in 1908, he organized a school of writers—*Darul Musannifin*—at Azamgarh to carry on the highest traditions of Islamic learning. Shibli Nomani's approach to religion stood in direct contrast to Sir Syed's. Sir Syed had approached Islam from the values of the modern West. Shibli approached western values from the viewpoint of Islam. Politically, Shibli stood in between Sir Syed's pro-British attitude and the anti-British sentiment of the later writers. As late as 1908, he contended that 'fidelity to the ruling power was a religious duty for a Muslim'. But one could say from the whole trend of his thought that if ever a conflict arose between his allegiance to Islam and his loyalty to the British he would be willing to sacrifice the latter for the sake of the former. For him, Islam stood on a much higher pedestal.

## RISE OF NATIONALISM

a greater interest. In 1912, with the advent of the Italo-Turkish and the Balkan wars, a wave of sympathy for Turkey and of resentment at the British policy ran throughout Muslim India. It now began to attack the British policy more vehemently.

Anti-British feelings mounted steadily among the Indian Muslims from 1912 onwards. Muslim literary figures poured forth their discontent. Akbar's caustic epigrams and satires, Shibli's wistful and pungent writings, Iqbal's forceful poems—they all began to arouse Muslim middle classes from their apathetic slumber. Certain

periodicals appeared, which carried the flame of discontent from house to house. Maulana Azad's *Al Hilal*, Zafar Ali Khan's *Zamindar*, Maulana Mohammad Ali's *Comrade* and *Hamdard*—these and various other periodicals awakened a new political consciousness among the Muslims. Abul Kalam Azad was both politically and religiously a radical, Zafar Ali a fire-brand, Mohammad Ali not only a powerful writer but a great organizer: it was Mohammad Ali who organized the famous Dr. Ansari Mission to Turkey in 1912. With the outbreak of the first Great War in 1914, and Britain at war with Turkey, the Government came down heavily on these journals. They were all suppressed and their organizers thrown into jail. As years passed, the discontent became deeper. In 1916, the Muslim League joined hands with the Congress. In 1917 came the historic pronouncement of a change in British Government's policy towards India. But tension continued to grow. The war ended, with the Rowlatt Acts, Gandhiji's threat of Satyagraha and the Amritsar massacre. The flames of national discontent rose higher and higher. The Indian Muslims also were fully prepared to throw themselves, heart and soul, into the turmoil of any political uprising.

The years 1920-21 would have, in any case, witnessed a political upheaval in the country. But Gandhiji's leadership changed its complexion. From sporadic outbursts of terrorist violence, it took the shape of a non-violent campaign. Muslim India gladly placed itself

under his leadership. The protest against the dismemberment of Turkey expressed itself in the organization of Khilafat Committees throughout the country, linked up with a central Khilafat Committee. The release of Ali brothers, through Gandhiji's efforts late in 1919, gave a new strength to the movement. The theological weight of Indian Islam also was thrown fully into the scales against the British. The leaders of the Ulema, as well as the rank and file theologians throughout the country, carried on a ceaseless propaganda in favour of nationalism. Maulana Azad came out of prison in 1920 and pushed on the movement still further. In May 1920, the all-India Khilafat Committee adopted Gandhiji's non-cooperation programme—several months before the Congress had done so. The Muslim League also could not remain far behind. Under Shaukat Ali's persuasion, the League Council adopted the N. C. O. programme, but the real work was done under the aegis of the Khilafat Committees. The years 1920-21 witnessed a fusion of the Hindu and the Muslim nationalism which had been growing in separate channels for a long time. The unity generated a tremendous strength. The Government felt shaken to its very core. Few Indians, Hindus or Muslims, understood what they were fighting for. For the moment, they were content to struggle ahead. It was, indeed, a glorious struggle!

### RENASCENCE OF COMMUNALISM

But we cannot forget that the politi

upheaval of 1920-21 had a deep religious complexion. The Hindu masses were drawn into it by the appeal of Gandhiji's asceticism and his promise of *Ram Rajya*. Maulana Azad and Mohammad Ali, the two outstanding Muslim leaders, too, were intensely religious personalities. For Azad, it was a Muslim's duty either to immolate himself or to retain his liberty. The two interesting episodes of the period—the *hijra* of 1920 and the Moplah rebellion of 1921—are indicative of the religious spirit of the movement. This 'dual spiritualism' was fraught with serious consequences. As long as the Hindus and the Muslims stood in opposition to the British, they were likely to pull on together. But after Gandhiji had withdrawn the movement, in February 1922, following the Chauri-chaura incident, and Mustafa Kamal had taken the wind out of the sails of the Khilafat agitation, in November 1922, by his deposition of the Caliph, the country was bound to return to constitutionalism and elections. Extreme politics cannot maintain itself for a long time. Mohammad Ali, on his release in 1923, said that he was merely walking out into a larger prison but his presidential address at the Coconada session of the Congress was full of moderation: the old fire was leaving him. C.R. Das and Moti Lal Nehru were advocating Council-entry. With the return of constitutionalism—based as it was on separate electorates—the *facade* of Hindu-Muslim unity was smashed up, and communa-

lism, with all its naked ugliness, came to the forefront.

Between 1924-27, the atmosphere in the country was surcharged with communal bitterness. The sense of frustration following the failure of the political movement found expression in communal uprisings. The year 1924 saw a spate of Hindu-Muslim riots all over the country. Gandhiji fasted. But nothing could check the communal poison eating into the vitals of Indian political life. The Muslims thought they had been betrayed by the Hindus. The Hindus regretted their having joined the antiquated cause of the retrograde Muslim community. These were the days when the Hindu Mahasabha flourished. The Moplah rebellion merely added grist to its fanaticism. Swami Shradhanand, who had bared his chest before machineguns at Delhi, and had been asked to address the Muslims from the Jama Masjid, a unique honour for a non-Muslim, now became the firebrand leader of communalism, and began to organize *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* movements, which merely brought in their wake the whirl-storm of *tableegh* and *tanzeem*. Lala Lajpat Rai, that stalwart builder of Indian nationalism was now one of the big champions of Hindu communalism. The Muslim leadership was even more affected. Maulana Mohammad Ali gradually withdrew from active politics, though till the very end of his days he had not become an ardent communalist. But the big brother, Shaukat Ali, was completely sold over to communalism. Even the intellec-



tualists were metamorphosed. Amir Ali no longer criticised the British. Khuda Bakhsha openly condemned Hinduism.

## NATIONOLISM ON THE MARCH

But even in these dark days of communal passion there were outstanding men—Maulana Azad, Dr. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khafi, Khaliquzzaman and others who continued to adhere to the nationalist stand. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema, which had been founded in 1919 by Maulana Mohammad-ul-Hasan and had given its famous *fatwa* in 1921, asking the Indian Muslims to stand by non-cooperation with the British, had ceaselessly carried on its activities, under the guidance of Mufti Kifayatulla, in favour of nationalism. The Muslim-League itself took a little time in going over to communalism—though it was hardly an important body. Following the appointment of the Simon Commission in 1927, it was divided in two groups, the loyalists organizing themselves under Firoz Khan Noon and Dr. Iqbal, and the others, under Mr. Jinnah's leadership, deciding to boycott the Commission. The nationalist Muslims received a further shake-up in 1928. The publication of the Nehru Report brought about a schism. Many of the top leaders, including Mohammad Ali, ranged themselves against it. An all-party conference of the Muslims, including the section of the League which was guided by Mr. Jinnah rejected the scheme. But a larger number were willing to throw in their lot with the Congress. They organized the Nationalist

Muslim Party. During the Civil Disobedience campaigns of 1930 and 1932 a large number of nationalist Muslims participated. In 1931, Nationalist Muslims from all parts of India met in conference at Lucknow, presided over by Sir Ali Imam.

From 1930 onwards, following the Economic Depression, people all over the world were dividing themselves into two different groups, the one that wanted to tear to shreds the existing order of society and re-shape it nearer to the heart's desire, and the other that wanted not only to maintain but stabilize the *status quo*. It was a conflict between progress and reaction, between a democracy purged of its economic disabilities and a fascist *kultur*. The progressive forces continued to triumph everywhere in India between 1930-31. A large number of Indian Muslims continued to be in the Congress. The Ulemas like Husain Ahmad Madni of Deoband and Ubaidulla Sindhi consistently supported the Congress. Among Muslim congressmen, names of Maulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Ansari are outstanding. A deep religious thinker, an erudite scholar and a powerful orator, Maulana Azad has always appealed to a fairly large section of Muslim intelligentsia. The Congress socialist ranks also had a large number of Muslims : Yusuf Mehr Ali's name immediately comes to mind. The publication of the Communal Award, and the decisive Congress policy of indecision in the matter, further alienated some Muslims. Dr. Ansari and Khaliquzzaman

threatened to resign if the Congress fought the award without first reaching an alternative agreement of its own. A large number of Muslims now began to form separate Muslim organizations, politically sympathetic to the Congress but not exactly of the Congress.

Of these, the Ahrar Party of Punjab was easily the most outstanding. Taking birth in 1930, it worked hand in hand with the Congress during the two civil disobedience movements, and had a full share in the nationalist sacrifices. It has been remarkably anti-British and remarkably radical in social views. It agrees with the political programme of the Congress, but regards it as half-hearted and timid. It has a broad international outlook. When the present war broke out in 1939, the Ahrars were the first to denounce it as purely imperialistic. Many of the Ahrars have been clapped into prison on account of their views. In the Frontier Province, there had already come into existence the Khudai Khidmatgars, organized by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. They represent a nationalist and socially progressive religious movement, organized on thorough non-violent lines. During 1930 Civil Disobedience, they gave a wonderful account of themselves as strict disciplinarians. Since then, the organization, completely wedded to the goal of complete independence, has been practically at the disposal of the Congress. Confined to the Pathans, it is linked up with the Congress through the personality of Abdul Gaffar Khan. Its line of action is simple and straightforward: "If the Hindus,

in an independent India really want to dominate the Muslims, then we will fight the Hindus. But first we must unite with them to fight the British". Even among the Momins, the weaver-community, political consciousness of the nationalist type, is on the increase. They have organized themselves into an All-India Momin Conference. It claims to represent 45 millions of Indian Muslim—"kisans, labourers and artisans who make their living by the sweat of their brow.... the bulk and the backbone of the Muslim community in India.....the masses as against the classes." There have been other Muslim political organizations, with nationalist leanings, like the Shia Political Conference. There have been some provincial movements too—in Kashmir, the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, re-christianed as National Conference in 1938, organized by Sheikh Muhammad Abdulla; in Bengal, the Krishak Praja Party; in Punjab, the Unionist Party; in Bihar, the Independent Muslims; in Baluchistan the Independent League.

The elections of 1937 demonstrated the triumph of progressive forces everywhere. In Humayun Kabir's words: "Among Hindus, Congress swept the polls and stalwarts of the past regime were overwhelmed. Among Musalmans also, the reactionary elements were discredited, if not destroyed. In Bengal, the League representing the vested interests was demoralised by Mr. Fazlul Haq's victory on a Praja ticket over the Bengal leaders of the League. In the Punjab, the League standing for communal

exclusiveness and reaction was routed by Sir Sikandar's combination of the moderate among Hindus and Musalmans. In the United Provinces, the League which represented relatively progressive force triumphed over the vested interests organized by the Nawab of Chhatari and his group. In the North Western Frontier Province, Congress trounced the League which fared hardly better in Sind. In a word, all over India, the stage seemed set for a move forward in which the best elements among the Musalmans and the Hindus could co-operate". But the heavy hand of Fate or, call it a combination of tremendous historical forces, seemed to be dead-set against it. Some people think that if the Congress had decided, immediately after the elections, to form provincial ministries, it could have gathered and harnessed all this potential energy for the nation's progress. In that case, weak reactionary regimes could not have been set up in the provinces where the Congress had won a thumping majority of votes; it were these regimes which gave a chance, in fact, the fillip, to forces of reaction to grow. It would have strengthened the Congress position in the non-Congress provinces too. In Bengal, Fazlul Haq was anxious to obtain the constructive co-operation of the Congress. It was only when he did not get it that he threw himself into the arms of the Muslim League. In Punjab, a similar set of circumstances forced Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan to seek the League.

1. Humayun Kabir: *Muslim Politics*, 1906-42, pp 14-15.

support. The adhesion of Fazlul Haq and Sikandar Hayat Khan contributed greatly to the building-up of the League power.

There was nothing wrong about the role the Muslim League had adopted during the elections of 1937. But once the Congress ministries had been formed, the League went into full opposition. The vested interests, threatened by the progressive policy of the Congress in legislature and government, rallied under the League banner. The Congress Ministers, in spite of all sincerity, committed some mistakes of omission and commission, which gave a handle to the Muslim League to incite the Muslim masses against it. The reactionary forces in Indian Islam once again began to grow in importance and, within a short time, were able completely to overthrow the progressive ones. In the meantime, the conflict between the Congress and the British Government too was assuming wide dimensions. The British Government badly needed allies in all reactionary camps. The League, under the glamour of power-politics, the keynote of reactionary forces all over the world, clutched at the opportunity. The alliance between the British Government and the Muslim League was cemented. Indian politics was clearly entering a new phase.

## CHAPTER THREE

# Muslim League and the Movement for Pakistan

### DR. IQBAL'S ALLAHABAD ADDRESS

The idea of partition is generally traced back to the famous presidential address of Dr. Mohammad Iqbal at the Allahabad session of the League in 1930. On this occasion, Hazrat Allama Iqbal gave expression to the view that he considered the consolidation of north western provinces to be 'the final destiny of the Muslims at least of northern India'. In this connection, a few facts have got to be noted. Firstly, Dr. Iqbal made it clear that in expressing this view he was merely expressing his 'personal wish', and that he believed that so far as the Muslim people were concerned they certainly would stand by the federal idea. Secondly, Dr. Iqbal was not thinking in terms of a partition of the country. He enunciated the doctrine that in view of India's infinite variety in climates, races, languages, creeds and social systems, she might grow into a number of autonomous states based on unity of language, race, history, religion and identity of economic interests, and in consistency with this, contemplated the consolidation of the Muslim North-west in one political unit of an all-India federation. This,

what Dr. Iqbal called the 'territorial solution' of the communal problem, was a valuable contribution to Indian political thought. Dr. Iqbal was strongly opposed to separate electorates and thought that if the Muslim provinces were given autonomy they might be able to arrive at a better understanding with the other communities rather than on the basis of separate electorates. Thirdly, it should not be forgotten that Dr. Iqbal was a strong supporter of the necessity of a federal constitution for the whole country. He, of course, wanted a true federation, in which the residuary powers were to be left entirely to self-governing units and the central federal government was to exercise only those powers which were expressly vested in it by the free consent of the federal units. In all this, though inspired by the pan-Islamic ideal, Dr. Iqbal like a true prophet, was also thinking much ahead of his time.

### CAMBRIDGE VAGARIES

It is interesting to note that the idea of Pakistan first came into existence in a small group of Muslim students in the Cambridge University. In January 1933, when the Joint Parliamentary Committee was carrying on its work of examining witnesses four of these students, Mohammed Aslam Khan, Rahmat Ali, Sheikh Mohammed Sadiq and Inayatullah Khan brought forward a small four page pamphlet, entitled *Now or Never* in which they for the first time advocated the idea of a partition of the country. The theory that the Muslims



are a separate nation, and are therefore entitled to a separate state of their own, was for the first time advocated in this pamphlet. For example, it pointed out that the Muslims differed in all respects from the non-Muslims, in dining and marriage, in customs and calender, in diet and dress—and were, thus, to all practical purposes a nation. This nation was to be provided with a home-land in the provinces of the Panjab, Kashmir, Sind and the North Western Frontier. They pointed out that nothing should come in the way of the creation of this new Muslim state since it would be twice in size and equal in population to France. These young students of Cambridge were clear about their difference from Iqbal's ideas. They took pains to emphasise this difference and pointed out that whereas Dr. Iqbal had proposed amalgamation of these provinces into a single state forming a unit of the all-India Federation, they wanted these provinces to be constituted into an independent state. The Muslims were not to be duped into a Hindu-dominated federation where they could not be masters of their own destiny and captains of their own souls. For the time being these were considered merely the vapourings of a few young enthusiasts. When asked what they thought of such a scheme, the Muslim representatives at the Round Table Conference brushed it aside as merely 'a students' scheme' and considered it 'chimerical and impracticable.'

Of the four signatories of the Cambridge pamphlet, the idea seems to have gone like

wine into the brain of C. Rahmat Ali, for he returned to it in July 1935, when he brought forward a new pamphlet in which he repeated the arguments of the old, and expressed a surprise as to why, if Burma could be separated from India, Pakistan could not be constituted into a separate state. In fact, Rahmat Ali seems to have made it the mission of his life. In 1940, at Karachi, he made a statement to the Supreme Council of the body which he had created for the propagation of the idea of Pakistan, which was later published as the *Millat of Islam and the Menace of Indianism*. In this pamphlet, he pointed out that the choice before the 'Millat' lay between the 'reconstruction in Asia and redestruction in India'. He condemned Indianism and pointed out that the Millat could be saved only by severing of ties with India which 'never was and never would be the Muslim motherland.' In the meantime, Rahmat Ali had extended the scope of his movement beyond the north-western provinces. He now talked not of a single Muslim state but of a number of Muslim states. The North, Western provinces, of course, were to be constituted into Pakistan, but Bengal, with its hinterland of Assam, was to become the 'Bange Islam', 'by the saving right of self determination', and the state of Hyderabad was to become Usmanistan 'as a part of our patrimony,' and these three independent Muslim states were to form a triple alliance..

#### DR. LATIF'S SCHEME

An ex-professor of the Usmania University.

Dr. Latif, brought the idea of Pakistan from the region of cheap sentimentalism to that of academic discussion. In 1938, he published two very scholarly pamphlets, *The Cultural Future of India* and *A Federation of Cultural Zones for India*. In 1939, he systematised his ideas in a book called the *Muslim Problem in India*. Dr. Latif started with the thesis that India was not a single composite nation. But that did not mean that she had to be partitioned. Dr. Latif advocated a united India, whose unity was to be based on a system of free and homogeneous nationalities, each possessing a geographical home. Dr. Latif suggested a division of India into fifteen cultural zones, four Muslim and eleven Hindu, and provided each zone the freedom of constituting itself into a homogeneous state with a highly decentralised form of government within. Dr. Latif merely advocated certain principles but did not wait to fill up the details. He does not give us any clear division of powers between the federal government and the autonomous units. He seems to approve the idea of the migration of populations from one zone to another but has not cared to analyse the difficulties involved in the act. He gave a few suggestions for the transitional period also. These included:—(1) a drastic restriction of the powers of the Centre, (2) the establishment both in provinces and at the centre of a composite stable executive instead of a parliamentary executive in the English sense; and (3) a provision of at least 33% of seats for the Muslims

in the central legislature. Regarding matters connected with religion, personal law and culture he suggested that the Muslim members of the legislature were to constitute a 'special committee' whose decision was to be final.

### A PUNJABI'S CONFEDERACY OF INDIA

Dr. Latif, by building up a scholarly thesis, brought into motion a very heated controversy, the last embers of which have not yet died out. In the summer of 1939, two stalwarts from the Panjab came forward with fresh schemes. One was Nawab Sir Mohammed Shah Nawaz Khan, who published under the name of *A Punjabi* a book called *A Confederacy of India*, in which, while agreeing with the Latif scheme in broad principles, he tried to fill up some details. Instead of India being divided into fifteen cultural zones, 'A Punjabi' suggested a division into five 'countries', all to be organized on the federal basis within and to be members of an all-India federation. A point which has to be kept in mind is that the Nawab Sahib too was not thinking in terms of a break away from India. Of course, he was thinking in terms of pan-Islamism. He thought that the establishment of such a confederacy would be 'the first practical step towards the liberation of Asia from the hands of Europe' and 'the ndaw of the long cherished ideal of pan-Islamism'. The Nawab Sahib was very clear in emphasising the fact that the foreign element among Indian Muslims was quite negligible and that they were as much sons of the soil as the Hindus

were, and that ultimately their destiny lay within India and not outside it.

### SIR SIKANDAR HAYAT KHAN SCHEME

Another scheme which also came from the Panjab was from Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, the prime minister. He gave an address before the Panjab legislature which was republished as *Outlines of a Scheme of Indian Federation*. He suggested a division of India into seven zones or regions. Out of these seven zones, two were to be Muslim and five Hindu. Each zone was to be organised on federal lines within, and was to form a part of a bigger Indian federation. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan believed in yoking the provinces and the states together. He hoped that this would encourage collaboration between contiguous and kindred provinces and states and also would enable both to meet and cooperate at the all-India centre on a united basis. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan thus believed in creating *three different planes of political power*. He did not believe in the abolition of the provinces as a basic unit. He strongly felt that the Central Government also had to be retained, but besides the provinces and the centre, a third factor, viz. the zone or the region, was to come into existence. This zonal or regional government was to take over a fairly large number of powers from the federal list of subjects, such as broad-casting, promotion of scientific research, professional and technical training, internal custom etc., and was to administer a number of subjects, such as criminal

and civil law, control over professions, newspapers, books, labour welfare, trade unions etc. *concurrently* with the provinces. The province was to be the fundamental unit of administration.

Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan's scheme was full of a number of defects. His division of the country into seven zones was most arbitrary. It was guided more by the idea of political expediency than by an understanding of the cultural implications of the problem or an appreciation of the economic factors. South India, for example, is proposed to be divided into two arbitrary regions. Madras, Travancore, Madras states and Coorg are to form one region, whereas Bombay, Hyderabad, Western India states, Bombay states, Mysore and C. P. states are all grouped together under another region. Now, this brings Gujratis and the Malayalam people together but splits up the Marathi, the Telugu and the Kannada people into different regions. It is very difficult to understand why C. P. states are proposed to be detached from the C. P., Rajputana states also are proposed to be broken up and distributed. Bikaner and Jaisalmer are to join the Panjab region. Other are to become members of an inchoate mass of states sprawling over the entire middle region consisting of Gwalior, Central India states, Bihar and Orissa states and the provinces of the C. P. and Bihar. The scheme thus suffers from a number of defects but perhaps it was responsible for bringing the idea of Balkanisation of the country for the first time.

into practical politics.

## MUSLIM LEAGUE RESOLUTION

It was at this stage that the Muslim League stepped into the field and adopted the idea. While all sorts of fantastic schemes were being talked of, the Muslim League had stood aloof from them. It laid down, as early as 1928, that the "only form of government suitable to Indian conditions is a federal system, with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the constituted states". This was the 'true federation' of Iqbal's conception too. When the Act of 1935 was passed, creating autonomous provinces linked up with a federal centre, the League accepted to work it 'for what it was worth'—'in spite of the most objectionable features contained therein, which render real control, responsibility of ministry and legislation over the entire field of government and administration nugatory'. The Election Manifesto of the Muslim League, June 1936, is a dignified document. It lays down two objectives for which the representatives of the League were to work in the legislatures:—(1) the immediate replacement of the existing provincial constitution and the proposed central constitution by 'democratic self-government', and, (2) in the meantime, to utilise the legislatures in order 'to extract the maximum out of the constitution *for the benefit of the people in the various spheres of national life.*' 'The Muslim League Party', it further said, 'must be formed as a corollary so long as separate electorates exist.

but there would be free cooperation with any group whose aims and ideals are approximately the same as those of the League Party'. There is nothing communal, or reactionary, or retrograde in this manifesto. It breathes the fresh air of progressivism. Small wonder that people thought the progressive elements in all communities would now combine together for giving a deadly struggle to all that was reactionary and old-fashioned. Pandit Nehru said, on behalf of the Congress : "The Congress has gone to the Assemblies with a definite programme and in furtherance of a definite policy. It will always gladly cooperate with other groups whether it is a majority or a minority in an Assembly, in furtherance of that programme and policy".

But with the formation of Congress ministries the whole outlook began to change. Mr. Jinnah announced that "the Muslims could expect neither justice nor fair play under Congress governments." In June 1943, the League presented eleven demands to the Congress which included, among other things, 'recognition of the League as the one and the only authoritative and representative organisation of the Indian Muslims'. In October 1938, the Sind Provincial Muslim League Conference, presided over by Mr. Jinnah, asked 'in the interest of abiding peace of the vast Indian continent and in the interest of unhampered cultural development, the economic betterment and political self-determination of the two nations, known as Hindus and



Muslims,' for a division of the country into two federations, a federation of Muslim States and another of non-Muslim ones. In the spring of 1939, the Working Committee of the Muslim League passed a resolution condemning the the provincial part of the constitution as having utterly failed to safeguard even the elementary rights of the Muslims in various provinces. On August 5, 1939, Mr. Jinnah declared that a democratic system of parliamentary government was an impossibility in such a vast country with different nationalities. On August 28, 1939, the Working Committee resolved on "the inadequacy of safeguards in face of a permanent hostile communal majority". In September 1939, the Working Committee declared that "Muslim India was irrevocably opposed to any federal objective which must necessarily result in a majority community rule under the guise of democracy with a parliamentary system of Government." The resolution further said that such a constitution was "totally unsuited to the genius of the peoples of this country which is composed of various nationalities and does not constitute a national state."

December 22, 1939, was celebrated as a day of deliverance from the yoke of Congress ministries, but the idea of coalition ministries with the Congress was not yet dead. In February 1940, Mr. Jinnah said that the Muslims of India would not accept the arbitrament of anybody, Indian or English, but would determine their destiny themselves. But it seems that *Mr. Jinnah had not yet thought of partitioning the*

country. As late as January 1940, Mr. Jinnah wrote in an article in the 'Time and tide': "A plan must be evolved that recognises that there are in India two nations, but *both must share the governance of their common mother land.* In evolving such a constitution the Muslims are *ready to cooperate with the British government, the Congress or any party* so that the present enmities may cease and India may take its place among the great countries of the world." It is clear from this statement that Mr. Jinnah, though expressing his faith in the two nations theory, was still thinking in terms of a common government. Only a few weeks later there came the historic Pakistan resolution of the League, in which it was pointed out that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it was designed on the following basic principle *viz.* 'that geographical contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary with the area in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "independent states" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.....' This was the famous Pakistan resolution of the Muslim League.

The resolution, vague and indefinite as it is, leaves a number of things absolutely undefined. It is very difficult to understand what exact geographical areas are contemplated. Does it mean that the Muslim majority provinces

should federate together, or that each one of them should become a separate independent state? The resolution refers to 'territorial readjustments' but does not point out how and what readjustments are to be made. There is no reference to plebiscites. There is absolutely no mention of the nature or form of government which was to be brought into existence into the newly created state or states. It was, therefore, natural that the resolution was not taken very seriously in the country. It was generally supposed to be merely adopted for the sake of improving the bargaining position of the Muslim League. The immediate background of the Muslim League position confirmed these suspicions. During the period succeeding the resignation of the Congress ministries, the Muslim League had suddenly been shot into importance, thanks to the British policy. The resignation of the Congress ministries had come as a surprise and a shock to the British Government. For sometime they hoped that the Congress would relax. But when they found that its attitude was definitely stiffening, they turned towards the Muslim League and other communal organizations for support. The British line of propaganda was immediately switched on to a different plane. The Congress began to be discredited. It was represented to have been an obstacle in the way of minority rights, though the significant thing is that as long as the Congress was in office no Governor had ever blamed it for following a communal policy, and even after the

Congress resignations, a number of Governors had testified to the non-communal character of the Congress ministries, but now because it suited the British policy, Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League suddenly became the accredited representatives of the Indian Muslims.

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PAKISTAN

A new opportunity had thus offered itself to Mr. Jinnah and he made full use of it. He shrewdly guessed his own importance from the British point of view and clutched at the opportunity. He said at the Lahore session of the League: "It will be remembered that up to the time of the declaration of war, the Viceroy never thought of me but of Gandhi and Gandhi alone....." Now his chance had come. He allowed himself to be used as a pawn in the British game, because it suited his own communal interest. He now insisted on a categorical assurance from the British Government that it would not adopt any constitution without the previous approval of Muslim India. The British Government obligingly agreed. The August announcement of 1940 practically met the demand of the Muslim League for a clear assurance to the effect that no future constitution, interim or final, would be adopted by them without its approval and consent. For the British, it was a good cover to mislead world-opinion which was becoming strongly favourable to India. For Mr. Jinnah, it was an excellent opportunity of building up the strength of the Muslim League. Mr. Amery

took up the line that the British Government were bursting with impatience to hand over power to Indians, but the problem was whom to hand over power. The moment the Indian political parties agreed, power would be handed over to Indians. Both the British Government and Mr. Jinnah thus entered into an alliance for strengthening their own position at the cost of the Congress. It was purely an alliance of expediency—very much like the non-aggression pact between the Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, signed only a few months earlier as a cover for both to strengthen their respective positions. Like the Soviet-German Pact, it proved immensely valuable to both.

It is against this background of Indian politics that we have to 'place' the Muslim League demand for Pakistan. It came four months after the resignation of the Congress ministries, when the British Government had adopted the desperate policy of strengthening the Muslim League to serve as counterpoise against the Congress. It is wrong to think that Mr. Jinnah was a tool in the hands of the British. In fact, he was fully exploiting the weakness of the British position. He was gathering power in his hands more quickly than the German Fuhrer. He ruled over the non-Congress provinces more autocratically than the Mughal Emperor. Ministries were propped up or pulled down at his behest. The Muslim Provinces of Punjab and Bengal loyally, one might even say meekly, supported Mr. Jinnah. He could keep important Muslim leaders out of the Defence Council

and threatened them with expulsion from the League if they did not obey. Like the background music in medieval warfare, the demand of Pakistan was continually being reiterated by the Muslim League and its leading spokesmen, while the battle against the Congress was being waged in full fury. In April 1941, the Madras session of the League re-emphasised, and further extended, the scope of the Lahore resolution.

In December 1941, the League Working Committee, at its Nagpur meeting, expressed its 'deep concern' and 'alarm' at the 'growing tendency in a section of British press and politicians ... to start a policy of appeasement of the Congress' and warned the British public and government "that any departure from the policy and solemn declaration of August 8, 1940 and pledges to the Musalmans would constitute a gross breach of faith with Muslim India and that any revision of policy or any fresh declaration which adversely affects the demand of Pakistan or proceeds on the basis of a Central Government with India as one single unit and the Musalmans as an all India minority shall be strongly resented by the Muslims who will be compelled to resist it with all the force at their command, which would, at this critical juncture, among other things, necessarily result in serious impediment of the country's war efforts." The Congress had never gone so far in its threats! In the next constitutional offer, the Cripps proposals of March 1942, the British Government did every thing to satisfy the

Muslim demand for a partition of the country. When the August Resolution of the Congress was passed, Mr. Jinnah once more came down with his vehement criticism. "We consider", said Mr. Jinnah "that the decision of the Congress is not only a declaration of rebellion against the British Government but it is an invitation to internecine war, and this movement is launched to force the hands of the British Government to accept the Congress demand which we consider to be the destruction of our demands". He advised the Indian Muslims to keep aloof from the movement, which had been started with a view to obtain power for the entire people of the country.

The terrible repression that came in the wake of the 'August Rebellion', and the systematic dismantling of the Congress machinery at the hands of the Government gave a further chance to the Muslim League to grow in power. A week after the commencement of the disturbances, the Working Committee of the League called upon the British Government to guarantee to the Muslims the right of self-determination and to assure them without delay that they would abide by the verdict of a plebiscite of the Muslims in favour of Pakistan. The Muslim League even afforded to set up a provisional government, in conjunction with those elements which were willing to come to the support of the Government, in order to mobilise the resources of India for her defence and the successful prosecution of the war, conditional on the grant of Muslim

demand. This was a change in policy—a bid to shake the seeds of the seemingly 'dead' Congress. Mr. Jinnah had so far pleaded for the continuance of the 'status quo', in the absence of a settlement on the basis of Pakistan, but now he made the demand that, settlement or no settlement, the Muslims should not be kept out of power on the plea that the Congress was in power. The Muslim League was able to establish its ministries, with the help of the Government in Muslim-majority provinces. In Sind, Khan Bahadur Allah Bux was dismissed on thinnest grounds, and a Muslim League ministry was formed. In Bengal, Mr. Fazlul Haq was made to sign a letter of resignation, drafted and typed by the Chief Secretary, and Sir Nazimuddin, with the blessings of Mr. Jinnah and the Bengal Governor, formed a League ministry. Mr. Jinnah also made efforts to undermine Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan's influence in Panjab and bring him under greater League discipline. In Sir Sikandar, he met a more tough opponent, though he could, to a certain extent, strengthen his influence over the Muslim masses of Panjab. Sir Sikandar's premature death, and the formation of a new ministry under Malik Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, however, gave some chance to Mr. Jinnah. Mr. Jinnah was thus in the high clouds of power and prestige and every increase in his power meant so much more strength to the Muslim League.

A halo naturally grew round the Muslim League demand for Pakistan. Muslims of various shades of thought began to see in it



visions which fitted into their own ideologies. This was the first positive demand which the Muslim League had raised. It was bound to revitalise the Muslim League. The Muslim politicians adopted it enthusiastically as a bargaining counter; the religious-minded leaders saw in it the coming on earth of the divine idea of life laid down in their religious scriptures—they felt that here was a chance for a true Islamic State to be born—the author had a talk during those days with one of the important leaders of the Ahmadiya movement and found him enthusiastically supporting the demand for Pakistan on the basis of reasons which were purely metaphysical; the Muslim socialists saw in it the millenia of a truly socialist state; the young men found in it a good fighting principle; the masses were filled with a new zeal—a new vista of power and a new horizon full of immense possibilities had been opened out before them. It was under this atmosphere of tense excitement, subdued reason and exaggerated sentiments that the demand for Pakistan took wings. With the help of unscrupulous propaganda countenanced by an alien Government, the idea grew into a faith, the faith into a religion, the religion into a dogma. It was a psychological escape from the stern realities of the situation—the chief danger lay in that it was an escape into a world of make-belief, wild irrationality and merciless fanaticism.

The demand for Pakistan was, thus not 'the outcome of any natural urge on the part of the

Muslims of India. Till the summer of 1940, they were hardly conscious of their being a separate nation. Dr. Iqbal's plea for the political consolidation of the Muslim North-west, in Mr. Jinnah's words, 'at once met with hostile criticism and even ridicule'. It was said that the poet-philosopher of Islam had, like all other poets, allowed his imagination to run away with his reason, that the idea was no more than a poetical flight, and that it had no practical value. The utterance of some irresponsible Cambridge dons were considered by responsible Muslim leaders as 'chimerical and impracticable'. Rahmat Ali and his 'National League for Pakistan' were objects of ridicule rather than respect. Schemes propounded by Dr. Latif of Hyderabad and Professors Syed Zafrul Hassan and Mohammed Afzal Hussain Qadri of Aligarh were more academical than political. The 'Punjab Plan' was of a speculative nature. So far as the League was concerned, the utmost that it demanded before 1940—after it had passed through twenty-seven months of hell-fire under Congress regime—was the establishment of 'two federations'. Mr. Jinnah, a few weeks before the Lahore resolution, was talking in terms of the 'two nations of India' sharing 'the governance of their common motherland'. The Lahore resolution asking for the assumption by the Pakistan regions of 'all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary' was more in the nature of a feeler than a formula, a slogan rather than an objective.

The tenacity with which the British Government went on strengthening the Muslim League and Mr. Jinnah—in spite of the Pakistan demand—and the way in which it converted them into a perpetual veto on Indian constitutional advancement, created the impression, and with every move that the Government took to reassure the League and to repress the Congress the impression went deeper into the popular mind, that it had decided to partition the country. It was the conviction of the demand being supported by the British which converted what was first taken up as a battle-cry into a blazing creed.

### THE CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES

But gradually, the ground began to slip from under the feet of the League demand. The indirect support given by the British to the demand for Pakistan was the result not of conviction but of expediency, and was bound to be withdrawn as soon as the expediency was over. Any one with the slightest insight into political affairs could have seen that it was never in the British interest to support a partition of the country, Dr. Beni Prasad could see it as early as April 1941.<sup>1</sup> A Government which had offered union on the basis of common citizenship to France in June 1940 and was aspiring towards Anglo-American union could not have been responsible for a partition of India as long as it had any hope of continuing

1. *Hindu-Muslim Questions*, Kitabistan edition, pp. 87-88.

its hold over her. A divided India, with the danger of complicating her relations with Afghanistan or Russia, was bound to confront British diplomacy with serious entanglements. A new factor had emerged into the picture after December 7, 1941. That was the danger of Japan smashing the British Indian Empire into peices. India never stood in greater danger of falling a prey to a ruthless foreign power as in the summer of 1942. The centre of gravity in international politics was quickly shifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and the problem of defending India became linked up with the need of preserving the Anglo-Saxon civilization. By the autumn of 1942, the war in the West had taken a definite turn in favour of the Allies, and the Congress 'rebellion' in India had been scotched. It was no longer necessary for the British Government to go on boosting the Muslim League.

### BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS PAKISTAN.

Gradually, the British attitude towards Pakistan began to clear up. We suddenly find, in the early winter of 1942, the Executive Councillors beginning to lay a particular emphasis on the need of maintaining the unity of India. Dr. Ambedkar said that in a dozen speeches in the Bombay Province. Sardar Jogendra singh spoke of the unity of India not only at a number of places in Punjab, but also during his address to the Historical Records Commission at Travancore. Other members also were not quiet. The 'personal' views of the

Executive Councillors grew into something like a policy in the Viceroy's address before the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce, in the Christmas of 1942. Lord Linlithgow strongly advocated therein the need of preserving the 'geographical unity' of India, emphasised the disadvantages of the country speaking with two or more voices, vigorously discountenanced the idea of two nations and made an appeal for justice to 'minorities, great and small'. Within a year the situation had so much changed that we find Lord Wavell, the succeeding Viceroy, addressing the Central Legislature in these words: "You cannot alter geography. From the point of view of defence, of relations with the outside world, of many internal and external economic problems, India is a natural unit. That two communities and even two nations can make arrangements to live together inspite of differing cultures or religions, history provides many examples.... England and Scotland, after centuries of strife, arrived at an absolute union. In Canada, the British and French elements reached a federal agreement which operates satisfactorily; the French, Italian and German elements in Switzerland agreed on a different form of federation. In all the above, there were religious as well as racial differences. In the United States many elements, racial and religious have been fused into one great nation with a federal structure, after the bitter experience of a disastrous civil war....The Soviet Union in Russia seems to have devised a new modification

of its already flexible system. These examples are before India for her constitutionalists to study...." What had brought this metamorphosis, people began to wonder? What, after all Stafford Cripps had meant when he talked of Muslim-majority provinces seceding away from the Indian Union and forming a separate state of their own?

### INDIAN POLITICAL REACTIONS

The immediate reaction of Lord Linlithgow's address before the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce was to scotch the atmosphere of compromise which had come into existence in the country ever since the failure of the Cripps Mission. Within a few days of the departure of Sir Stafford Cripps we find the Madras Congress legislature party, under Rajaji's inspiration, passing a resolution in which it recommended to the A. I. C. C. to "acknowledge" the Muslim League demand for separation should the same be persisted in when the time comes for framing the future constitution of India". While drawing the latter's attention to the need of a popular ministry in the province, it also suggested that "to facilitate united and effective action in this regard by such a popular government the Muslim League should be invited to participate in it". The A. I. C. C. meeting at Allahabad, engrossed in issues which it considered much more vital, rejected the recommendation. Rajaji, however, took up the mission of Congress-League unity in right earnest. There was ample evidence to suggest that

important elements in the Muslim League also were equally anxious for a compromise. A number of responsible League leaders, in Madras, Punjab, C. P. and other provinces, gave utterance to that desire. In Bombay, a memorandum was submitted to Mr. Jinnah urging upon him to take the initiative for a Congress-League pact. Non-official resolutions to the same effect were reported to have been tabled in various meetings of the League Council. In August, the Working Committee passed a resolution, which was later ratified by the League Council in November, to the effect that it was "ready and willing to negotiate with any party on a footing of equality". It was against this background that Rajaji had an interview with Mr. Jinnah in November, after which he gave expression to the opinion that there was a "reasonable chance" for settlement. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerji was similarly engaged in carrying on negotiations with Mr. Jinnah on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha. While these negotiations were still full of promise, the Viceroy came out with a blunt refusal to allow Rajaji to contact Mahatma Gandhi in prison and this plea for the geographical unity of the country, which immediately gave a helping hand to the reactionary elements in the Hindu Mahasabha and elsewhere. The Cawnpore session of the Hindu Mahasabha, which was held a few days after the Viceroy's speech, was a session of grateful thanks-offering. Once again, Vir Savarkar reaffirmed the Mahasabha's unflinching determination to

fight tooth and nail the Muslim League demand for Pakistan !

## MUSLIM LEAGUE REACTIONS

The Muslim League felt cheated, and chagrined. The Working Committee of the Bombay Provincial Muslim League came out with a denunciation of Lord Linlithgow's Calcutta speech as "a denial of the fundamental right of the Muslims to self-determination", and warned the British Government that "unless the Muslims were assured that their demand would not be side-tracked, they would have no other course except to devise sanctions for the acceptance of their demand". At the same time, we now find a greater desire on the part of the League to come to some kind of understanding with the Congress and the Hindus. Mr. Jinnah made persistent appeals to the Hindu leadership not to be taken in by the Viceroy's reference to India's geographical unity and not to "play the British diehard game". Efforts were being simultaneously made to strengthen the League organisation. Mr. Jinnah refused to associate himself with the work of the leaders' conference which met at Delhi to consider the situation arising out of Gandhiji's fast in February 1943, but he wrote, "I do, however, hope that your efforts may lead to the path of reason, and peace, and then there would come an opportunity for friendly negotiations which might, I trust, result in a settlement not only to the two major nations, Hindus and Muslims, but to all the other interests and minorities concerned". A



month later, at the Delhi session of the Muslim League he went still farther. "Nobody will welcome it more than myself", he announced, "if Mr. Gandhi is now really willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League. Let me tell you that will be the greatest day both for Hindus and the Muslims. If that is Mr. Gandhi's desire, what is there to prevent him from writing direct to me?...What is the use of going to the Viceroy? Strong as this government may be in this country, I cannot believe that they will have the daring to stop such a letter, if it is sent to me". He made an appeal to the Hindu public also to 'stop this internecine war, declare a truce, sit as equals and come to a settlement.' "How can you keep on saying", he asked, "that it is the British who keep us apart? Of course, I grant that the British take advantage of our folly. But we have devices of our own which are better than any devices that the British Government can fashion to keep us disunited. Why should not the country say, 'Unite and drive the British out?' It is no use appealing to other nations of the world."

### INNER CONTRADICTIONS

But the irony of the situation lay in the fact that Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League themselves were not in a position to take any risks in an effort to 'drive the British out.' It might have been due, as Prof. Humayun Kabir points out, to the fact that too much of legalistic thinking had made Mr. Jinnah incapable of direct action, or due to the

reactionary character of the League leadership in particular and the League following in general. During the years of its re-organisation, 1936 onwards, the League is being pulled in two different directions, the reactionary and the progressive. Mr. Jinnah had meant to carry the progressivists with him in the task he had undertaken and the goal which the League had placed before itself in 1936-7 was that of "full national democratic self-government for India". But, gradually, it found its main strength lying in following a policy of opposition and negation. All sorts of reactionary forces united themselves under the flag of the League to oppose the Congress provincial regimes. Mr. Jinnah soon found himself leading a motley crowd of Nawabs and knights, financiers and fanatics, with a sprinkling of raw youths. Circumstances soon threw him into an alliance with the British Government. All this, undoubtedly, strengthened the League position. The Muslim League could disentangle itself neither from the reactionary leadership, nor from the British alliance. The younger section chafed against both, but Mr. Jinnah seems to have fully adjusted himself to the situation. Due to this inner contradiction, though the League could fret and fume, it could never act. As Mr. Wiltred Cantwell Smith points out in his book on *Modern Islam in India*, pp. 297-8, "The League's programme was vague, its policy unsettled. It could count on the allegiance of many so long as it painted ideal pictures but did not in fact do anything. As soon as it

should begin to act, it was in danger of losing the support of those attracted only by its slogans—." In fact, it can act neither in a reactionary nor in a progressive way. The latter would go against its whole trend. But it cannot act in a reactionary way also, since that is likely to throw out the increasingly larger number of its members with a progressive bent of mind.

The acid test came when Gandhiji, in response to Mr. Jinnah's appeal, wrote a letter to him from his detention camp in Ahmednagar. Mr. Jinnah had boasted at the Delhi session of the League that the Government could not have the daring to stop a letter from Gandhiji addressed to him. "It will be a very serious thing indeed", he had said, "if such a letter were stopped." This had looked like a challenge. But when Gandhiji actually wrote that letter and the Government coolly stopped it, Mr. Jinnah weakly tried to wriggle out of the situation by saying that Gandhiji had written the letter not with a genuine desire to come to a settlement with him but 'to embroil the Muslim League to come to a clash with the British Government'. One wonders why Mr. Jinnah, while prepared to fight to the finish against the Congress and the Hindus, was anxious to avoid a clash with the British. It was exactly there that the weakness of the League position lay. The Muslim League had undoubtedly gained strength during the last seven years, but the foundations of that strength were most shallow. It was propped up on the one side by job-

hunting reactionaries. It was being buttressed, on the other, by a self-seeking Government. With the change in the political situation—international as well as Indian—with the Axis Powers being repulsed and the Congress repressed—Government support began to be withdrawn, but instead of reacting in a dignified manner Mr. Jinnah clung to petty crumbs of office in the various so-called Muslim provinces. He—unlike the Congress—was too much under the glamour of the very limited power which provincial ministries had placed in his hands to throw it away, and retire into wilderness. The latest to join his team of ministries was that formed by Aurangzeb Khan in the N. W. F. P., in May, 1943. He was not going to do anything to jeopardise the position of the League ministries. Everywhere they were shaky, born out of sheer accidental circumstances as they were, and depended on the support of the British Government—in not a single Muslim province was the Muslim League in a majority. But Mr. Jinnah soon found that the British Government were chary of giving him even that chance of lording over limited power. His efforts to lighten the League control over the Unionist ministry in Punjab not only aroused an united opposition from the various elements in the province—Hindus, rural and urban, and Sikhs, pro-League and anti-League—throwing them all together, but also involved him in a direct clash with the British Government. The Governor stood firmly behind Malik Khizr Hayat Khan. Mr. Jinnah's failure in Punjab

was a pointer of the direction in which the wind was blowing.

## GANDHI-JINNAH TALKS

Opposition to the League leadership was expressed simultaneously by various elements in the U. P. and in certain other places also. Many people thought that the League was quickly disintegrating. The resignations of stalwarts like Mohammed Ismail Khan and Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman, members of the central executive, were significant. The younger element was getting restive at the futility of the League policy. It was at such a time that Gandhiji asked Mr. Jinnah, and the latter agreed, to have a heart to heart discussion of the communal problems in the country in general and the Lahore resolution in particular. The talks were held, in September 1944, at the Quaide-Azam's Mount Pleasant Bungalow, Malabar Hills, Bombay. They met with a view to convince each other, and be convinced. Gandhiji suggested humorously that they should be closetted together till they arrived at a settlement. Talks continued for more than three weeks. The entire problem was brought under the hammer. There were sharp differences about the two nations theory. While Mr. Jinnah dexterously advocated it, Gandhiji mercilessly opposed it. But Gandhiji acknowledged the soundness of the Lahore resolution and the League, and was willing to concede what he called the substance of the League demand. "The Lahore resolution", Gandhiji said, "is

quite sound. Where there is an obvious Muslim majority they should be allowed to constitute a separate state by themselves....." Gandhiji contended that the right had been conceded both in the Rajaji formula and in his own formula. But it could be done only 'with due regard to the interests of the whole of India'. For that, Gandhiji could go only upto a point, not beyond that. He said: "The right is conceded-without the slightest reservation, but if it means utterly independent sovereignty so that there is to be nothing in common between the two, I hold it to be an impossible proposition....."

### GANDHIJI'S OFFER

Gandhiji's offer could be summed up under the following points :—

1. India was not to be regarded as two or more nations but as one family consisting of many members of whom Muslims living in the North-west zone. i. e. Baluchistan, Sind, the N.W. Frontier and that part of the Panjab where they were in absolute majority over all other elements and in parts of Bengal and Assam, where they were in absolute majority, desired to live in separation from the rest of India.

2. If the majority vote was in favour of separation they were to be allowed to form a separate state as soon as possible after India was free from foreign domination.

3. There was also to be a treaty of separation which was to provide for efficient and satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, communication, customs, commerce and the like, which were to continue to be matters of common interest between the contracting parties.

4. The treaty was to contain terms for safeguarding the right of minorities in the two states.

5. Immediately on the acceptance of the arrangement by the Congress and the League, the two were to decide upon a common course of action for the attainment of the independence of India. The League, however, was free to remain out of any direct action to which the Congress resorted and in which the League was not willing to participate.

The negotiations ended in a breakdown, but Gandhiji's offer stands. Asked by a press correspondent, on September 25, whether the offer had been withdrawn, Gandhiji replied that it had not been made in any bargaining spirit, and, therefore, there was no question of its being withdrawn. He reiterated his belief that he considered it 'a just and proper solution' of the problem.

### CAUSES OF BREAKDOWN

There has been a wide difference of opinion in the country regarding the causes of breakdown. Mr. Jinnah's insistence on the two-nations theory and Gandhiji's equally strong advocacy of India being one nation, are supposed to be the main cause. But I think that the break-down could not have come on a mere theoretical question like this. They could have disagreed on this point, and yet agreed on the constitutional plane. Gandhiji directly hit the nail when he said, at the end of the talks, "My experience of the previous three weeks confirms me that the presence of a third power hinders the solution." The important point to be noted in this connection is that, though he protested strongly against the terms offered by Gandhiji, Mr. Jinnah did not finally throw down the

proposals. He merely shifted the ground. In his letter dated September 25, he wrote, "But now you have, in your letter of September 24, made a new proposal of your own on your own basis, and the same difficulties present themselves to me as before, and it is difficult to deal with it any further unless it comes from you in your representative capacity." Next day, he wrote, "It was not possible to negotiate and reach an agreement unless both parties were fully represented. For it is a one-sided business, as it will not be binding on any organisation in any sense whatever, but you would, as an individual, only recommend it, if any agreement is reached, to the Congress and the country, whereas it will be binding upon me as the President of the Muslim League. I cannot accept this position. I hope you do see the unfairness and the great disadvantage to me, and it is so simple and elementary for any one to understand."

That, I think, was the main reason for the breakdown of these talks. If Mr. Jinnah did not agree to Gandhiji's terms, the latter had asked for counter-terms in the light of the Lahore resolution, which the Quaide-Azam wanted him to sign. Mr. Jinnah never came out with the counter-terms: he merely shifted the ground of talks. It was as clear as anything that Mr. Jinnah did not want to commit himself and thus wind up the bargaining position of the Muslim League. If Mr. Jinnah had offered some very concrete proposals, he would have committed the Muslim League, of which he was the official spokesman, without drawing



out an equally strong commitment on behalf of the Congress party. Gandhiji might have agreed to these terms. Then, an effort would have begun for the release of the Congress leaders. Neither Gandhiji nor Mr. Jinnah were sure that the British Government would concede such a demand: in fact it appeared that if there was any chance of Congress-League unity they would raise the greatest obstacles in the way. The proposals might have remained before the country for months, possibly years, and during this period a pressure was likely to be exerted on the Muslim League to further circumscribe their demands, 'in the interests of the country'. Moreover, who could have said that the British Government might not have come out, at the psychological moment, with something better? I feel that the atmosphere in September 1944 was quite favourable for the friendliest discussion between the Congress and the League, but lacked the reality which was necessary for these discussions ending in a settlement. I have all along held that the moment the British decide to part with power, there will be a settlement between the Congress and the League.

### CONGRESS-LEAGUE DIFFERENCES

For, the rift between the Congress and the League on this issue is not very wide. Gandhiji's offer, as he made it plain, was based on the stand the Congress has consistently taken on this question. Before the Congress had taken the plunge in August 1942, it had

already agreed to the principle of self-determination for the Muslims. The Working Committee meeting which met to discuss, and reject, the Cripps proposals, in April 1942, while reiterating its faith in the unity of India, had made it clear that it could not think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will—though, at the same time, it emphasised that "every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and co-operative national life." "Each territorial unit", it further said, "should have the fullest possible autonomy within the Union, consistently with a strong national state". What the A. I. C. C. did at its Allahabad session, through the Jagat Narain Lal resolution, was merely to reiterate the Congress disagreement with the idea of vivisectioning the country, and not to give up this stand. This was confirmed by Maulana Azad. "No part of the Delhi resolution", he wrote to Dr. Latif in reply to his query, "has in any way been affected or modified by any subsequent resolution of the A. I. C. C. . In fact, the Delhi resolution was confirmed by the A. I. C. C. ." The League demand too, it appears, was losing its intransigence. Even before the Viceroy's refusal to partition India in December 1942, the League had expressed its readiness to join any effort to form a provisional war-time government at the centre, provided all parties including the Congress and the British Government undertook

to give effect to the partition of India, if the Muslims in a referendum demanded it. It was for the first time, after the Lahore resolution of March 1940, that the League talked in terms of a unitary government at the centre, albeit of an *ad hoc* character. As Mr. W.C. Smith points out, "In fact, it began to speak of a free Pakistan in a free India; and began to sound as if it meant it. A prior condition for settlement remained: the recognition of the right to Pakistan. But that condition in 1942 was constantly being made more reasonable: Pakistan was becoming less of a weapon, more of an actual goal. For the first time, a plebiscite was mentioned; the League at last agreed to abide by the decision of the people. Of whom the plebiscite was to be taken remained vague (and highly disputable); nevertheless this reversal of policy was in itself an important, as well as a significant step."<sup>1</sup> But for the dilemma in which the League is placed today, and which leads it into the blind alley of dead inaction, a settlement between Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah would have taken place in September 1944.

1. W. C. Smith : *Modern Islam in India*, p. 314.

**PART II**  
**THE PROBLEM : INDO-BRITISH RELATIONS**



## CHAPTER FOUR

# India and Britain : The 'Democratic Experiment'

### INDIA AND BRITAIN

The theory that the British conquered India in a fit of absent-mindedness has long been exploded. The establishment of the British Empire in India was the consummation of a number of historical forces, which all seemed to be pulling in the same direction. The Industrial Revolution, with its consequent increase in production, sent the Britisher out in search of foreign markets. An East India Company was brought into existence, under a charter of Queen Elizabeth, on December 31, 1600. Stream after stream of British traders came to India. Godowns were opened in Bombay, Broach, Surat, Madras, Calcutta and a few other places. For hundred and fifty years, the British remained as mere traders. They begged or stole concessions. They wooed and won favours. As long as the Mughal Empire was in the hey-day of its glory, they could not look beyond their scales and stores, supplies and sales. Then came, almost as Bernier, the French physician, had predicted, a gradual toppling down of the Mughal Empire. Independent dynasties rose in different parts of

the country. Bengal paid but lip-homage to Shah Alam. Nizam-ul-Mulk in Deccan openly declared his freedom. The Maratha efforts at empire-building gathered a fresh momentum. Their energies, which had remained pent-up due to Aurangzeb's quarter of a century's stay in Deccan, were now released. The Sikhs consolidated themselves in the far-off Punjab.

It was while this game of empire-building was being played between the various political powers in India that the Portuguese and the Dutch, the French and the English, became interested in the struggle, and began to take a part in it. The English were ultimately able to beat down all their European rivals, and take a more solid stand in the struggle for empire. Till then, the Marathas had emerged as the strongest Indian power, throwing the Nizam in the south, and the disintegrated Rajputs in the north, into the shade, and were making inroads into the regions of the Sikhs on one side and the territories of the Nawabs of Oudh and Bengal on the other. But, in the meantime, taking advantage of the Maratha complications in the north, there had emerged in full power, like a boil in the thigh, the state of Hyder Ali. A great tragedy for the Marathas was Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion of Delhi, in 1761, but it was not so great a tragedy as it is generally supposed to be. The Marathas quickly rallied from the blow—but the time was utilized by the English in establishing their foot-hold in Bengal. The acquisition of the 'diwani' rights in the province came in 1765.

The English took deliberate advantage of the fratricidal struggle between the Marathas and the state of Mysore—of which the state of Mysore was more conscious of the ultimate danger from the British—and supported the former in suppressing the latter. The downfall of Mysore merely opened the way for the Maratha War (1776-83 A. D.), which ended in a clear victory for the Marathas. There were moments when the British came very near desperation. When the nineteenth century opened, they were thinking in terms of dividing the vast sub-continent of India between themselves and the Marathas, very much on the lines on which Napoleon had agreed with Czar Alexander at Tilsit, in 1807, to divide the continent of Europe between France and Russia. But, then, the decline of the Marathas came a little too quickly—of course, they were finally paralysed only three years after Napoleon's imprisonment at St. Helena. Once the Maratha Empire had been broken up, the path to British paramountcy in India became more or less smooth.

Another very common fallacy in connection with the establishment of the British Empire in India is that our political structure had completely broken up, and that it was out of an inchoate mass of chaos and confusion that the British built up the cosmos of law and order.<sup>1</sup> As can possibly be gleaned even

1. "In the case of India, so far from depriving her of pre-existing freedom and denying to her the opportunity of regaining it, we rescued her from the anarchy which is



from the above summary of events, the task of reconstruction had already been taken up by eminent Indian leaders. The eighteenth century is not such a dark era in our history as it is supposed to be. It was a century of Sirajuddaulah, of Hyder Ali and Tipu, of Madhava Rao I, of Mahadaji Sindhia, of Nana Phadnavis and a host of other fighters and statesmen. It were these persons who, in their own way, had been building up the unity of India long before the British came. They certainly worked at cross-purposes, as statesmen dealing with a cobweb of confusion, are bound to work. But till the British came in, with their traditional policy of balance of power, the Marathas had already carried sufficiently farther the process of unifying the country under their leadership. It was their pre-occupation with the British in the First Maratha War which made Hyder Ali so powerful. If the British had not interfered, I am perfectly convinced, the Marathas would have brought Tipu's power to an end and they would have emerged as the paramount power in the country. I do not say that the Maratha administration would have been as efficient and thorough as the British administration, but one thing that can be said in its favour is that it would have been an Indian administration. Still another equally common fallacy is that the

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the last negation of freedom. We established, within the vast quadrilateral encompassed by her mountain-ranges and twin seas, peace and order and the reign of law—the indispensable foundations of freedom."

L. S. Amery, in his foreword to *India and Freedom*.

Indians did not give a tough resistance to the British. This can be disposed of by drawing the reader's attention to the mere fact that it took the British a complete century—from Plassey to Mutiny—to establish their power in India, and at each step they had to cross a hurdle. It is not within the scope of this book to find out the causes of their ultimate victory; it is enough to point out that it was a hard-won victory.

### INDIAN NATIONALISM : BACK-GROUND:

The virility of the Indian people can be known by the fact that even before their political breakdown was complete—in fact, long before that—the throbbing of a new life had begun. Within a generation of the consolidation of the British power in Bengal, and long before it had been able to establish itself anywhere else, Bengali youngmen were approaching their British masters to make arrangements for the teaching of the English language, through which they wanted to obtain knowledge of the western arts and sciences and to find out what had made the British so powerful. When a number of European missionaries established schools and hostels in the various parts of Calcutta proper, and in Serhampore and other places, Indian youths flocked to them, and, though they detested their proselytizing zeal, they welcomed the knowledge which they were imparting. The College of Fort William, started in 1801 by Lord Wellesley for the probationers of the Covenanted Services,

became the meeting-ground of the eastern and the western scholarship, and there began that close inter-action between the East and the West which goes to build up the modern Indian civilization. In 1818, when the issue of paramountcy was yet to be settled with the Marathas, Ram Mohan Roy was writing to Amherst that nothing would satisfy the Indians more than facilities for learning the western arts and sciences. In fact, the gong of the birth of a new civilization had already struck even before the final death-knell of the old had sounded. I wonder, which other nation is capable of showing a greater resilience and virility !

Our renaissance began flowering in the shape of a number of religious movements. Ram Mohan Roy's Brahmo Samaj, originating in the Atmiya Sabha created by him in 1817, and taking its final shape in 1830, took the lead. In Maharashtra, it spread in the form of the Prarthana Samaj. The attempt was not confined to Hinduism. There were similar renaissance movements in the Islamic society, of which Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi, Syed Ahmad Ali of Bareilly, Mohammad Ismail, Karamat Ali of Jaunpur and Haji Shariyatullah of Faridpore were the early exponents. There were similar movements in the Parsi, Jain and other communities. As a result of these movements, the religious life of the Indians was put on a much higher level. This religious revivalism, it may be pointed out, was a reply to the challenge thrown by the western missionaries

that the Indian religions were narrow and decadent. Ram Mohan Roy was the first man to take up the challenge. He made a deep study of all the religions of the world. He studied the Muslim doctrines in Persian and Arabic and the Christian in original Hebrew. He translated the Upanishads and showed that they contained the greatest treasure-house of spiritual knowledge. Indians began to feel that they could be proud of their Upanishads and their past glory. A new wave of self-confidence was created in them. They could now look up with a feeling of equality, perhaps of superiority, at the Christian missionary and tell him that their own religions, Hinduism or Islam, contained as high moral precepts as Christianity could offer them, and if they were partly superstitious, so was Christianity, with its faith in trinity and trans-substantiation. The writings of a number of European scholars, of Monier Wilson, Schopenhauer and others, revealing the beauty of the Indian classical literature through English, further added to this spirit of self-confidence. The desire for change and improvement soon permeated the sphere of our social life, and a number of religio-social movements, with a growing emphasis on social reform, came into existence and did much to leaven the Indian society to a higher level. In Bengal, for example, Brahmo Samaj was divided into two sections—Debendranath Tagore continuing to place emphasis on the spiritual side, but Keshab Chandra Sen preaching the doctrine that the only way to worship God was to serve

the poor, starving, down-trodden humanity. It was this individual, awakened by a new confidence in his religion and eager for social reform, who, for the first time, felt bitterly the galls and trammels of political servitude. Here lies the genesis of our national movement, and the sprouting of seeds of conflict between our contrymen and the imperial power.

This self-confidence in the greatness of the Indian culture, fostered by our Indian leaders of thought and the Orientalists, lies at the basis of our national movement. Politically enslaved, we felt that we were still heirs of a spiritual greatness which the West had never dreamt of. This process of thought reached its climax and was fully personified in the personality of Swami Vivekanand. When he left India for the 'World-Congress of Religions,' at Chicago, 1893, he was still under the spell of western power. But in America he had an occasion to see intimately, through its most highly advanced form, the western civilization, and he came back with disgust, and a redoubled faith in the glory of Indian traditions. "You might have conquered us materially", he told the West, "but we shall conquer you spiritually". With that note began our national rejuvenation in this country. We were soon able to catch the sympathetic vibrations of a spiritual nationalism which Mazzini, the Italian leader, was propounding to his countrymen. The writings of Mazzini had almost as great an influence on the earlier phase of Indian nationalism, as the writings of Bankim Chandra or the newer study of Gita. Surendranath

Banerji, our first political leader, had been moulded in the image of Mazzini--and did much to popularize his works in Bengal. The reading of the *Anand Math* showed the way for the organization of patriotic sentiments created by Mazzini in the minds of the people awakened by Vivekanand. Together with this faith in the greatness of the Indian culture, there began to grow a contempt for the Western. We find its seeds in the speeches of Vivekanand. The Abyssinian victory over Italy in 1896 and the defeat of the Colossus of Russia at the hands of a small Asiatic power like Japan supplemented it. With the Great War I, it reached its climax. Indians saw the western people fighting among themselves for things which seemed to them extremely petty, and motives extremely low. In Gandhi, this revolt against the West reaches its climax, both on the spiritual and the political planes.

### 'DEMOCRATIC' INSTITUTIONS

The growth of self-confidence and civic consciousness in the country created a dilemma for the imperialist rulers. An alien rule thrives best on ignorance. By the middle of the nineteenth century that ignorance was being dispelled, largely due to forces inadvertently created by the rulers themselves. The dilemma can be best expressed in Lord Elgin's words, in 1862: "The question of how we ought to treat that class of natives who consider that they have a natural right to be leaders of men and to occupy the first places in India, must always be one of

special difficulty. If you attempt to crush all superiorities you unite the native populations in a homogeneous mass against you. If you foster pride of rank and position, you encourage pretensions which you cannot gratify, partly because you dare not abdicate your own functions as a paramount power, and partly because you cannot control the arrogance of your subjects of the dominant race". A few Englishmen could see the other end. Elphinstone, for example, had written as early as 1822, "It may be half a century before we are obliged to do so, but the system of government and of education—which we have already established must sometime or other work such a change on the people of the country, that it will be impossible to continue them to subordinate employment; and if we have not previously opened vents for their ambition and ability we may expect an explosion which will overturn our government." But even Elphinstone was not able to rise above the characteristic British distrust of the Indian character. "The period when they may be admitted into counsel as you propose," he wrote to Ellis in 1826, "seems to be distant, but they might very safely be consulted on all topics not political, and where there were no secrets to keep and no places to dispose". Other Englishmen were much more intransigent. Nothing was done. In 1857, there came the first in a series of 'explosions' on the lines prophesied by Elphinstone. The British were able to survive it—but only with terrible ruthlessness.

The Indian Councils Act of 1861 for the first time recognised the right of the Indians to representation in the legislative bodies of the country. The reason was clear. The Mutiny had revealed the wide gulf that had existed between the rulers and the ruled. That, according to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, was the primary cause of the Mutiny. A few Indians had to be associated with the task of administration in order to keep in touch with what the people in the country generally thought. All that the Act of 1861 provided for was the nomination of a few non-official Indians to sit on the Central and the Provincial legislative councils. Thirty-one years later, in 1892, after seven years of insistent clamour on the part of the Indian National Congress for greater rights, another Act was passed in which the principle of election was admitted by the back-door (some of the non-official members could now be nominated from panels of persons 'recommended' by recognized local bodies and chambers of commerce), and the powers of the councils were slightly extended to those of asking questions and of discussing, though not of voting upon, the budget. It was very frankly laid down by Lord Dufferin that the Councils Act did not imply "an approach to English parliamentary government". The Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 were a step—undoubtedly a much bolder step—in the same direction. The legislative councils were now further enlarged, the principle of election was admitted, non-official majorities (by nominated *plus* elected



members over official members in all the provinces and of elected members only in Bengal) were provided, and the councils were enabled to vote on all matters of administration, including the budget. An Indian member was also admitted to the Executive Council in each of the provinces and at the centre. Again, any intention to establish parliamentary institutions in India was loudly disclaimed. The conservative Viceroy, Lord Minto, emphasised that they were not aiming at "the transplantation of any European form of representative government to Indian soil". The liberal Secretary of State, Mr. Morley, was even more emphatic. "If it could be said", he wrote, "that this chapter of reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system of government in India, I for one would have nothing to do with it". It was, therefore, hardly surprising that the legislative councils under the Act of 1909 soon turned into cheap, ineffective, debating-societies.

### POLICY OF COUNTERPOISE

The British were not merely contented with a repudiation of the applicability of democratic institutions to India. They adopted a systematic policy of ruthlessly breaking the very foundations of democracy. Democracy can thrive only in an atmosphere of good-will, understanding and unity. Unity would have been fatal to British imperialism. In 1909, they dealt the heaviest blow at Indian unity by the acceptance of the principle of separate electorates for the Muslims. The policy of *divide et*

*impera*, invented by Roman Pro-consuls was not new to British imperialists. "*Divide et impera*", a writer in the *Asiatic Journal* had suggested in 1821, "should be the motto of our Indian administration". "Our endeavour", another writer pointed out in the same journal, "should be to uphold the (for us fortunate) separation which exists between the different religions and races, not to endeavour to amalgamate them". This policy was officially endorsed in 1858 by Lord Elphinstone, the Governor General. Till nearly the end of the century, the Muslims were singled out for official disfavour. However, with the growth of the nationalist movement, which was largely supported by the Hindus, there came a change in British policy. The partition of Bengal, whatever its administrative expediency, was the result of a desire to drive a wedge between the Hindu and the Muslim. "The object of the measure", writes Sir Henry Cotton in *India in Transition*, "was to shatter the unity and to disintegrate the feelings of solidarity..... It was no administrative reason that lay at the root of this scheme. It was part and parcel of Lord Curzon's policy to enfeeble the growing power, and to destroy the political tendencies, of a patriotic spirit". According to the *Statesman*, the idea was "to foster in Eastern Bengal the growth of Mohammadan power, which, it is hoped, will have the effect of keeping in check the rapidly growing strength of the Hindu community". The introduction of separate electorates for the Muslims was frankly a part

of the British theory of "counterpoise of native against native". The Agha Khan deputation which had waited on Lord Minto to demand separate electorates was, as described by Maulana Mohammad Ali at the Coconada session of the Congress, "a command performance". "A very big thing", wrote a high official of the Government of India to Lady Minto, immediately after Lord Minto had accepted the principle, "has happened today. A work of statemanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition".

There was universal opposition to the introduction of the vicious principle of separate electorates. The Secretary of the British Indian Association wrote: "The Committee are opposed to communal legislation. If one religious class be favoured, members of all the prevailing religions in India would clamour for special representation". Already, more than one religious community had put in its claims. The Madras Land-holders' Association thought that it "was calculated to accentuate differences which are fast losing their importance in secular affairs, and interfere with the growth of a sentiment of unity among the people, which was a necessary condition of progress". The Government of India, in their Despatch, Oct. 1, 1908 admitted that the Hindus generally regarded the proposals "as an attempt to set one religion against the other". The Bombay Presidency Association expressed the

opinion: "The keynote of the proposals for reform is the creation of a counterpoise to the influence of the educated class". The Gujrat Sabha thought that it would "set up class against class, and so neutralize all the forces of Indian public opinion by causing their mutual destruction". In the case of the Muslims also, as pointed out above, the demand was engineered. "The Mohammedan leaders", writes Ramsay Macdonald, "are inspired by certain Anglo-Indian officials, and those officials have pulled wires at Simla and in London and of malice aforethought sowed discord between the Hindu and Mohammedan communities by showing the Muslims special favours".<sup>1</sup> Even the Anglo-Indian *Statesman* wrote: ".....We view with great concern the action of the Government in selecting one section of the population for differential treatment such as is not tendered to any other portion..... The more carefully the Council Reforms worked by the Government of India are considered the more apparent does it become that the scheme amounts to little else than the provision for including in the legislative councils more land-owners and more Mohammedans". Morley himself had suggested joint electorates with reservation of seats for the Mohammedans, but he weakly yielded before Lord Minto's firm stand. It was the Viceroy's intransigence which carried the day in face of universal opposition and mistrust of the measure.

1. Ramsay Macdonald: *Awakening of India*.

## THE WAR AND ITS SEQUEL

Indian nationalism took up the challenge. Attempts to create a greater harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims began almost immediately. From 1910 onwards a number of Unity Conferences were held, which did much to dispel the mis-understanding between the two communities. In 1912, there came a radical change in the attitude of the Muslim League. This was due to the adhesion of a large mass of middle class people to the League. The Muslim middle classes, like Hindu middle classes at an earlier stage, were fast outgrowing their dependent position within the imperial system, and began to express their dis-satisfaction. In 1913, the Muslim League proclaimed its adoption of the cause of self-government. Soon after, the Agha Khan and his friends resigned the membership of the League. But they were quickly replaced by a whole new group of middle-class Muslims with nationalist leanings. Differences between the Congress and the League were bridged. From now on, both began to hold their annual meetings at the same time and place. In 1916, at Lucknow, they entered into a Pact, the League adopting the 'Home Rule' programme of the Congress, and the latter conceding separate electorates for Muslims, and representational weightage for minorities in the legislatures. The Khilafat question also was agitating the Muslims. Out of this unity—which, it has to be admitted, was largely superficial—came a tremendous ener-

gisation of the national movement. "The Hindu professional classes", as K. B. Krishna points out, "wanted allies. They supported the Khilafat movement. The Muslim professional classes wanted allies. They supported the Indian National Congress. ....The masses of both faiths came together in joint demonstrations and meetings of protest against imperialist repression." <sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, the bases of the national movement were being broadened in another direction too. The new industrial classes were joining the ranks of the Indian nationalism. Throughout the nineteenth century, the British kept their economic stranglehold on the Indian people tight. But in the last quarter, due to rise of rival imperialisms, Indian industries also got a chance. By the beginning of this century, two large centres of factory production had developed, the cotton factories of Bombay and the jute mills of Bengal. Around this class of British and Indian industrialists, there emerged a whole class of field-factory proletariat. Just as the professional classes had aimed at replacing a group of Britishers who still enjoyed a practical monopoly of medical, legal and journalistic functions in India, the industrial classes now likewise aimed at replacing the British trade-monopolies in India. Since this class had to fight against the competition of foreign goods, they took to supporting the Swadeshi movement. The adhesion of the industrial classes went to strengthening the extremist

1. K. B. Krishna: *Problem of Minorities*, p. 149.

section of the Congress, which was now being organized by Tilak, 'that arch leader of sedition.' To these classes were added the students, merchants, petty shopkeepers, clerical employees and all the lower strata of the middle classes. During 1914-19, all classes, the professional, the industrial and labour, together with the lower strata of the middle classes, unitedly stood against the government. The war had brought a great prosperity and strength to the Indian industrialists. As Shevalankar points out,<sup>1</sup> whereas in 1900 Indian mills supplied only 9 per cent of India's requirements as against 64 p. c. met by imports (mostly from Britain), in 1921 their percentage had shot up to 42 and imports declined to 26 p. c.. Similarly, the iron and steel industry, which might have gone down but for abnormal conditions created by the war, increased its output of finished steel from above 19,000 tons in 1913 to 123,890 tons in 1918-19. During 1914-18 alone, the production of cotton piece-goods was doubled, the output of the jute mills and woollen mills was nearly trebled, and iron and steel industries had shown a remarkable rise. All this meant so much grist to the national movement. The Congress, the organised expression of political unrest, emerged much stronger and, through its alliance with the Muslim League, was able to confront imperialism with a much more united opposition. Such a combination of forces, particularly during the critical years of the war, was bound to cause concern to India's rulers.

1. Shevalankar : *The Problem of India*, p. 178.





of them. The Provincial Executive also was remodelled. One part of it was to be composed as before of officials—and was to control the “reserved” departments of administration. “Reserved” Departments were those which were not “transferred” to the control of popular ministers. Among the transferred subjects were education, agriculture, public health, local government etc. They were now to be controlled by “Ministers” chosen from and responsible to the majority in the legislative council. Any department not specifically transferred was automatically “reserved”. The Chief “reserved” subjects were finance and the maintenance of law and order. The franchise was widened and an appreciably larger electorate was created. “Such”, writes Coupland, “was Britain’s response to India’s loyalty to their common cause. Previous steps towards Indian self-government had been short and hesitant; this was a long and bold one. Democracy had hitherto been expressly repudiated; now it was expressly accepted as the goal of British policy”.<sup>1</sup>

While the British were busy jerry-building this fabric of ‘democratic’ institutions, they were also dexterously engaged in digging at the very roots of Democracy. The Montford Committee had unequivocally condemned communal electorates on the basis that they “are opposed to the teaching of history, perpetuate class-divisions, stereotype existing relations, and are very serious hindrance to the development of the self-governing principle.” But they not

1. Coupland : *Britain and India*, p. 67

merely retained the principle in the case of the Muslims, but extended it to the Sikhs. The Act of 1919 went several steps ahead. It retained separate electorates, provided the Sikhs with a separate electoral roll and separate constituencies and recognized the claims of the non-Brahmins of Madras as well as those of the Marathas and the allied castes, the nomination of members to represent Depressed classes, the representation of workers in organized industry and separate electorates for Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, and Europeans. The principle of communal representation was thus extended to all sorts of religious groups. Montagu's visit, in the meantime, was able to take the moderate section of the Indian politicians out of the Congress—they started the All-India Liberal Federation—but this merely had succeeded, in making the Congress more extremist. Alliance with other reactionary forces was also being cemented. Policy towards the Princes was rapidly changing. Instead of being treated as mere vassals, their sovereign rights now were being recognized. In 1921, they were organized into a Chamber of Princes.

The Indians—even the moderates of moderates—soon realized how uncomfortable it was to live in the rickety house that the Act of 1919 had attempted to build. It is true that the new constitution was inaugurated under extremely inauspicious circumstances. In the meantime, the Indian national movement had found a way of expression and a leader of indomitable will. The inauguration of the new constitution had

the chilly background of the Rowlatt Acts, Jallianwalla Bagh and Gandhi's Satyagraha. But it is not correct to say that the new constitution was not given a full chance. The moderates had rallied round it from the very beginning. Sapru became a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Chintamani became the Minister of Education in the U. P.. Surendranath accepted office as a minister in the Bengal Government. The more extremist group of the Congress also soon came round in the form of the Swarajists, the Responsivists and the Independents entering the Councils. Vithalbhai Patel, of the Congress, rose to be the first Indian President of the Central Legislature. But the hollowness of the legislative chamber soon became manifest—and even the moderates retreated in disgust: Sapru and Chintamani had both to resign. As a result of the working of the Act of 1919, the Governor emerged much stronger than he was ever before—whatever control was relaxed by the Central Government in favour of the 'responsible' ministers in the provinces became vested in him, and the ministers merely became pliant instruments in his hands depending on his 'favour or frown for their office, and absolutely un-connected with, and irresponsible to, their legislatures. Whatever fraction of 'responsibility' had been conceded by the Act in theory completely broke down in practice. The evidence given by a Madras Minister, Sir K. V. Reddi, before the Muddiman Committee is a good commentary on the working of the Act: "I am Minister of

Developments minus forests. I am Minister of Industries without factories, which are a reserved subject, and industries without factories are unimaginable. I am Minister of Agriculture minus irrigation.....I am also Minister of Industry without electricity, which is also a reserved subject. The subjects of Labour and Boilers are also reserved".

### THE ACT OF 1935

The next constitutional charter, the India Act of 1935, was an act of prodigious labour. "Years of discussion, series of memoranda, half a dozen Commissions, half a dozen reports, mountains of 'evidence' all went to its making. Indian question was on the anvil for eight long years. One would expect the result to be a prodigy of statesmanship. Shevalankar, however, calls it "a prodigy of imperialist statesmanship", "an elaborate and ingenious device to frustrate the emergence of a free India and to secure—so far as constitutional provisions can secure—the continuance of British rule in circumstances totally different from those prevailing at the time of its establishment"<sup>1</sup>. Why this merciless criticism? The Act of 1935 claims to be a very long stride on the road towards full democracy. Coupland thought that "apart from safeguards, which proved difficult to work, and the relation of British officials in the Central Government and—a dwindling company—in the provincial

1. Shevalankar: *The Problem of India*, p. 186.

administration, the status of India, if the Act came into full operation, would be comparable with that of a Dominion before 1914" <sup>1</sup>.

The Act transferred all departments of provincial administration, including justice and police to the control of ministry jointly responsible to the legislature. This itself was highly significant, Schuster and Wint write: "An Indian province is no unimportant entity. The most important are.....more populous than the British Isles. The powers of the provincial governments include the responsibility of law and order over vast territories, and for public services which in many provinces have become as elaborate as those of a European state. That such great areas should be popularly administered is no light thing" <sup>2</sup>. At the Centre also, responsible government was partially introduced. With the exception of Defence, Foreign affairs and Ecclesiastical Affairs, which were "reserved", the entire field of administration was to be "transferred" to popular ministers, working on British Cabinet lines. The electorate was enlarged to include between 35 and 40 million voters, which was more than five times the Montford electorate.

These seemingly liberal provisions of the Act were more than off-set by the fact that it was hedged in with special responsibilities, safeguards and reservations. In the provincial field, the authority of the legislature is seriously limited

1. Coupland: *Britain and India*, p. 81.

2. Schuster and Wint: *India and Democracy*, pp. 143-4.

by the principle of "executive independence", which makes the Governor, appointed in England by the King, the agent of imperialism, a virtual dictator of the province. The Governor not only is entitled to override any and every decision of the legislature but he has a number of "special responsibilities" in the discharge of which he is to act exclusively in his own discretion. In case, he finds the Ministers not conducting the government "on lines consistent with the discharge of his special responsibility", he can declare that the constitution has broken down, and "assume to himself all such powers as he judge requisite to retrieve the situation". The Governor, in brief, is under no obligation to accept the advice of Ministers who possess the confidence of the lower house, nor need he abide by the verdict of the electorate.

The Federal structure is one of the curios of constitutional mechanisms. It will consist of a bi-cameral legislature, partly elected from British Indian Provinces, partly nominated by Princes. The election to the upper house will be direct, on the basis of high property franchise, and to the lower house indirect, by the provincial legislatures. In spite of these serious limitations, however, we find that this legislature will be able to control very little. Defence, foreign relations, the regulation of credit, currency and exchange, railways—they will all be outside its purview. More than 80 p. c. of the central budget will not be subject to the vote of the legislature. Above all, there are very lengthy, complicated and fool-proof provisions in the Act

which prohibit the legislature from taking into consideration, much less passing judgment upon, any measure which may directly or indirectly affect British trading and financial interests in India. While the legislature, on the one side, is circumscribed in all sorts of ways, the Governor General has been armed with limitless powers, executive, legislative and judicial. He is, in fact, "erected into a despot with more complete, indisputable and overwhelming power than that wielded by the totalitarian dictators".

The Act of 1935 claims to be a very bold advance on the road towards democracy in India. It for the first time placed some real power in the hands of the Indians in the provincial field of administration. It also promised to part with some power, though much more truncated, at the Centre also, but that was hedged in by almost impossible conditions. Sir Samuel Hoare could confidently assure the British diehards in the House of Commons that, "short of a landslide, the extremists cannot get control of the Centre". The Tories, however, were not to be satisfied even by being doubly reassured; they wanted a tenfold tier of assurances, and the India Act of 1935 fully provided for this. At the Centre, the most important departments of administration, the Defence, Foreign Affairs etc. were to be continued to be "reserved". The popular ministers had nothing to do with them. But even in the limited sphere of "Transferred Departments", the ministers were partially subject to the

"Special Responsibilities" of the Governor-General. The Governor-General could also disrupt—perhaps was enjoined by the constitution to do so—all prospects of unity among the ministers by loading them with nominees from the princes and representatives of various communities. The Federal Assembly to which this shadow cabinet was supposed to be responsible was itself double-crossed by the presence of one States' nominee as against two representatives from British India. These representatives from British India were not to be directly elected by the people of India—even by the 'peoples' of India—but, were to be nominated by the members of the Provincial Legislature on the basis of communal constituencies. Here the India Act was making a curious departure from the constitutions of the rest of the world. Everywhere in the world, it is the lower house which is directly elected. In India, that privilege was conferred upon the upper house, where the direct elections were again circumscribed by high property franchise. This rickety legislature, again, was in no sense a sovereign or constituent body. In legislation, in budgetary control, in matter of administrative supervision, it was fully subjected to the Governor General's over-riding, and parallel, powers. So far as control over economic matters was concerned, it was a plaything, a doll, a spineless puppet, in the hands of the British vested interests. Once the Act of 1935 had come into operation, however close we might have come to the warm neighbourhood



of Dominion Status, prospects of any economic development of India would have been chilled or frozen for ever.

Much is made of the extension of franchise. It had now undoubtedly been extended to about 25 p.c. of the adult population (about 42 p.c. of the adult males and 10 p.c. of the adult females). But what good is mere extension of franchise? A vote is hardly a substitute for a piece of bread, and it becomes definitely nauseating when you find that you can exercise it only in a very very limited way. And what if you are further told that with each vote you disrupt the ranks of Indian unity and deal a blow at the foundations of Indian democracy? Under the Act of 1919, the electorate was broken up into ten parts: now it was regimented into seventeen. Each group voted within his own narrow groove, for a candidate who could inflame to fever height his communal passions, whether he was a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Sikh, a member of the Depressed classes, an Anglo-Indian or a Christian. Separate electorates were also thrust on the unwilling hands of women and Indian Christians. The Macdonald Award, "the affirmation of the policy of counterpoise through a labour spokesman", wanted to break away the Depressed Classes from the Hindus, and would have succeeded in doing so but for Gandhiji's fast, though the Poona Pact is hardly a complete annulment of this mischievous move.

The Labour Prime Minister, however, succeeded in introducing a new counterpoise.

That was of perpetually arraigning Muslim Provinces against Hindu Provinces and of introducing a new constitutional barrier to national progress. This was secured by guaranteeing the Muslims a majority vote in the Panjab and Bengal by statute. A further step in the same direction was taken by the creation of the Muslim province of Sind. Now a number of Muslim provinces could be made to take a stand against the Hindu provinces. The idea of redistribution of provinces—"tainted with communalism" as it was, in words of the Nehru Report—had been in the air for a long time. In March 1937, when the controversy of joint *versus* separate electorates was going strong, some Muslim members of the Central Legislature, at an informal meeting, had indicated that they would agree to the institution of joint electorates on condition that Sind was separated from Bombay Presidency, and reforms were introduced in Baluchistan and N.W.F.P. on the same lines as in other provinces. The motive was clear. This would have meant so many more Muslim provinces. The A.I.C.C. at Bombay, in May 1927, declared itself in favour of the Muslim proposals at Delhi. It conceded the principle of redistribution of provinces, though on linguistic and cultural basis alone, and suggested the names of Andhra and Karnatik too. The Madras Congress of December 1927 also declared its faith in the readjustment of provinces. In the meantime, there was a split in the Muslim League. Two sessions of the League were simultaneously held in Calcutta and Lahore.

The "advanced" Calcutta session supported the principle of redistribution; the "backward" Lahore session reiterated its faith in separate electorates. The All-Parties Conference, held at Delhi, February-March, 1928, declared itself in favour of joint electorates subject for the present to reservation of seats and re-distribution of provinces. The idea of redistribution of provinces so as to provide a safeguard and a balance to Muslim interests had thus been brought into the forefront *as an alternative to separate electorates*. What Mr. Ramsay MacDonald did in 1932 was to retain separate electorates and to concede the principle of creating a block of 'Muslim' provinces as against 'Hindu' provinces. This could be achieved, to any substantial extent, only by giving statutory majority to the Muslims both of Punjab and Bengal. Unless Muslim majority was not fully assured in these two important provinces, the whole scheme was bound to topple down.

Another 'effort' made by the Act of 1935 was to draw in the Princely Order as a counterpoise against Nationalist India. The Princes were to nominate 104 out of 260 members in the Council of State and 125 out of 375 in the Federal Assembly. This block of Princey nominees was bound to array itself behind the Political Department, dance at its piping and become a solid front against all progressive forces. The Act of 1935 drew into a closer alliance with British imperialism a class which was described by Marx as "the most senile tools of English despotism.....the strongholds

## CHARACTERISTICS

The various 'democratic' experiments in the country, from the Act of 1861 to the Act of 1933, and even to the Cripps offer of 1942, bear a close family resemblance. Each one of them has been apparently undertaken to meet the exigencies of a particular situation. In 1861, it was the need to put the administration in touch with the thoughts and sentiments of the people of the land; in 1892, to meet the Congress demand for a share in the 'loaves and fishes of administration'; in 1909, to rally the moderate section of the people in order to enable the government to deal more strongly with the

radical ; in 1919, to thwart the national demand for self-government ; in 1935, to do something to assuage a national movement growing mightier day by day ; and, finally, in 1942, to appease the Indian aspirations, aroused by the out-break of the world-war, and to meet the world-opinion, becoming growingly critical on the Indian situation. Each one of these 'reforms' has been the out-come of a number of forces simultaneously working, the most important of which has always been the national movement in India entering some new phase of progress and strength. Each one of these 'reforms,' therefore, has been in the nature of a concession, a concession wrung out of unwilling hands. It is, therefore, natural that the hands that conceded them have also, in each case, tried, at the same time, to strengthen the British paramountcy. As a matter of fact, a regular tug of war has been going on during the last half a century between India's will to freedom and Britain's will to perpetuate the subjection of India. The various political reforms have been so many 'milestones on the road of this struggle.

It is true that they are the cheapest that we can get. There has always been a big hiatus between the national demand and Britain's professed fulfilment of it. The Act of 1892, the outcome of seven years of incessant propaganda carried on by the Indian National Congress, both in India and England, was correctly described by some one as 'mountains in labour producing a rat.' The Reforms of 1909, as the

Montford Committee itself acknowledged, did not, and could not, satisfy Indian aspirations. Dyarchy stood self-condemned. The type of federalism evolved by the Act of 1935 was universally condemned in India. The Cripps offer was contemptuously rejected by the Congress, the League, the Mahasabha, the Sikh Conference, in fact, by every political group that mattered in this country. Why has it been so? Clearly, the intentions of the framers have never been honest. They have tried to meet the national demand only superficially. Their main idea has been to withhold power. They have only offered us the shadow, never the substance. Lord Cromer's words are revealing: "However liberal may be the concessions," he wrote, "which have been made and which at any future time may be made, we have not the slightest intention of abandoning our Indian possessions."<sup>1</sup> This determination they have tried to cover up by the garb of various kinds of pretexts.

Till 1917, the idea, or the pretext, was that representative and responsible government of the parliamentary type was not suited to India. So redoubtable a radical as James Mill declared that representative government was "utterly out of the question" in India. "We have to frame a good government," wrote Macaulay, "for a country in which it is impossible to provide the one great security for good government—The light of political science and of

1. Quoted by K. B. Krishna, *Problem of Minorities*, p. 311.

history is withdrawn : we are walking in darkness : we do not distinctly see whither we are going."<sup>1</sup> He could only hope that some day India would be able to adopt representative institutions, but he could not be sure when that day would come. The Act of 1892, according to Dufferin, did not imply "an approach to English parliamentary government." During the Morley-Minto changes, every effort was made to declare that there was no intention behind them to confer a parliamentary system on India. Till 1917, an insuperable faith was being expressed in the benevolent character of the British rule in India. There was Curzon's theory of paternal rule. India was governed by the British in her own interest. During the First Great War, due to a great upsurge of democratic ideology and national self-determination idea, the stand so far taken by the British on the question of their policy in India broke down completely. Now, they had to declare the 'progressive realization of responsible government' by the Indians as the goal of their policy in India. But they tried to circumscribe it by all possible means. Illiteracy, communal differences, political immaturity, a national psychology suited to autocratic regimes, lack of correct type of political parties, these and so many other factors—all the creation of the British rule in India—were brought out to justify the slowness of their pace. A partial advance was made in 1919. Ten years later a commission was to examine whether the Indians

1. *Speeches*, 126, 155.

had behaved properly during that period, and could be trusted with a little more of power, or even that little bit which was given before had to be withdrawn. Finally, there has grown the theory, so sedulously cultivated, that the British have got the ultimate responsibility for the "protection of social and religious minorities" of India. It became nauseating when it was coupled with Cripp's offer of self-determination to India.

The net result of these constitutional reforms in India has, therefore, been to throw community against community, caste against caste, one vested interest against another vested interest, and thus to widen the chasm between the various sections in India—in fact, something the very opposite of what a democracy aims at doing. The various commissions are appointed, and conferences convened, more with a view to disrupt the nationalist ranks than to face the situation squarely. Both the Acts of 1909 and 1919 were preceded by a vehement "rally the moderates" campaign. Montagu's visit in 1918 brought about the secession of the Moderates from the Congress. In 1925, we find Lord Birkenhead asking Lord Reading to use the statutory commission as 'a useful bargaining counter' 'for further disintegrating the Swarajist party'. In 1928, we find the same noble Lord urging upon the same Viceroy "to try to make a breach in the wall of antagonism" and to rally the non-boycotting Muslims, while leaving Mr. Jinnah "high and dry".<sup>1</sup> The Round

1. Quoted by K.B. Krishna, *Problem of Minorities*, pp. 307-8.



Table Conferencés were similarly designed. "The Muslims were set against the Hindus, the Sikhs against the Muslims, the tenants against the landlords, and the princes against their subjects; all against one and one against all.....".<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the commissions are appointed to dampen the sympathy expressed outside India for the nationalist cause; sometimes, merely to gain and bide time. Most of the pronouncements are vague and ambiguous. Words like 'responsible government' and 'dominion status' so often bandied before the Indian nationalists hardly mean much. Lord Irwin's declaration in October 1929 that the natural goal of India's advance was Dominion Status, was followed by six years of close scrutiny of Indian constitutional problems, and, finally, when the Act of 1935 came, we find neither in its letter nor in its spirit, any trace of any intention to fulfil such a promise !

### THE THREATENED FOUNDATIONS

Democracy, the British writers point out, has been growing in India twice as rapidly as in the Dominions. But its foundations continue to be threatened. The British Government has liberally extended the franchise, from 4 p. c. in 1919 to 14 p.c. in 1935, and has also transferred some responsibility of administration, from limited influence over provincial administration in 1919 to almost complete provincial autonomy in 1935. But this has been merely watering the

1. S. S. Caveeshwar, *Non-Violent Non-cooperation*, p. 311.

branches. Democracy in order to last, must march hand in hand with Education and Social Reform. In India, the government has neglected the first, and has not been in a position to undertake the other. A hundred and fifty years of British rule has only been able to make 10 p.c. of the Indian population literate: literacy was certainly much higher when the British began their conquest of this country. At the rate at which literacy has been progressing in India, it will take six or seven hundred years to make the entire population literate. There is another danger in the slowness of this progress. It exposes the educated few to the danger of being quickly engulfed by the ignorant mass. Demagoguery always thrives on illiteracy: and demagoguery is the worst enemy of democracy. As Lennard points out, "‘Government by the people’ is an ideal which takes us beyond the mere principle that minorities shall be heard and that every citizen shall have a right to express his views. Rights without the capacity to use them are of little value”.<sup>1</sup> This capacity can come only by education. But education, without a direct bearing on life, will hardly mean much. Education must draw the best out of the individual, that which is most noble in him, and should inculcate him with a flaming desire to use it for the betterment of the society. You cannot expect a man to think democratically of the welfare of the whole people, so long as glaring social injustices drive them to give most of their attention to sectional interests. A foreign

1. Reginald Lennard: *Democracy*, p. 3.

government is hardly competent to take up the cause of social reform. It is, therefore, not surprising that our legislatures, dominated as they are by an alien government, have failed to keep pace with the progressive opinion of the country. As a matter of fact—and this is an unfortunate fact—the government has depended more on reactionary elements than on progressive ones.

### WHERE DO WE STAND ?

Another point which may be mentioned here is that whatever democracy we have got is very very limited in its scope. It is limited both internally and externally. Internally, we find that a very small section of the Indian people, not more than 14% even under the Act of 1935, has been enfranchised. Externally, there are so many checks and restraints. There are the safeguards and reservations. There is the dominating power of the Secretary of State. There is the final sovereignty of the British parliament. The working of democratic institutions so far has always depended on the sweet will of the British masters. In 1939, when the Congress ministries resigned, instead of making an attempt to form alternative ministries or to settle with the Congress, with one stroke of pen, Section 93 was promulgated. The way in which Fazlul Haque was made to resign in Bengal and Allah Bux was thrown out of his prime minister's chair in Sind, throw ample light on the nature of provincial autonomy as it was functioning in various parts of the country. The

various attempts at enlarging the democratic institutions in India, thus, have, in fact, resulted in breaking up those very conditions in which democracy can be successfully operated. Now, this has led many people to think that, whatever might be the cause, the existing conditions in India are such that it would not be safe to establish democratic institutions.

I do not agree with this view. I know that there has been going on a deliberate effort to create those conditions in which democracy might get blown up. But I also know that, on the other side, very steadily and very surely, an attempt has been going on in this country for the last 150 years to create those very conditions in which we might be able to adopt a full democratic constitution. There have been great movements in the country, religious, and social, and political, and all these movements have helped in the creation of a great spirit of civic consciousness. It is out of this fountain-head that the stream of Indian nationalism is born. Gandhi, the greatest exponent of Indian nationalism stands in direct line with Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ranade and Gokhale. He is a political leader only by accident. At heart, he is burning with a great spirit of social upliftment. His Harijan work is much more important for him than the formation of ministries in the various provinces. If we go further down we find that he is essentially a religious man, a man who looks at the religion from the reformist point of view. If Gandhi had been born a century earlier,

possibly he would have devoted all his energy to the reform of the Hindu religion.

Our nationalism is, thus, a very comprehensive movement. It takes under its eagle-like wings the entire life of the country, social, cultural and artistic. Its foundations lie buried in a deep religious urge. Its main support lies in social reform and it is on account of these foundations and such a support that it has blossomed out in a nationalism of a non-aggressive, pacific and non-violent type. This national movement has affected our art and literature. It is the most dominating idea that is inspiring the Indian people to-day. It has been responsible to a very great extent for establishing a wide synthesis between the various communities of India. It was under the sentiment of nationalism that the Ali brothers worked in close cooperation with Mahatma Gandhi, and to-day the Frontier Gandhi, Maulana Azad and other leaders are making great sacrifices.

I am not unaware of the limitations of the national movement. I know that it has not always been able to maintain a very close alliance with the forces of social reform. In many cases, it has often catered to the revivalist tendencies as against the progressive ones. There are abundant examples of nationalism joining hands with reactionary forces with a view to carry on the political progress of the country. All these draw-backs are there. But at the same time there is a strong desire to purge our nationalism of all these revivalist and reactionary forces. I am confident that this

desire is bound to bear full fruit. Indian nationalism, inspite of growing opposition from many quarters, is to-day strong enough to take up the reins of the government and work them on democratic lines

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Essentials Of Democracy: Are They Lacking In India ?

### Section A : Political Parties

#### THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The main argument which is generally brought forward to support the thesis that democracy is not suited to India is that our political parties are very different both in composition and temper from the political parties in the West. The Indian National Congress, which is our greatest political organisation, is generally brought in for the greatest condemnation. It is pointed that the Congress is a medley of different groups and sections and that it does not stand for any definite economic or social principles. In the words of Schuster and Wint, "it includes millionaires, mill workers, landlords, peasants, saints, gangsters, professors, parochialists, experts in international affairs, liberals, anarchists, communists, ascetics, fanatical Muslims and fanatical Hindus. The only thing which unites them all is their anti-British attitude."<sup>1</sup> They also contemptuously describe the annual session of the Congress as "part gypsy

1: Schuster and Wint : *India and Democracy*,  
p.p. 165-6.

encampment, part football match, part parish bazaar." It is held by these writers that the Congress profession of faith in parliamentary institutions is merely a matter of expediency. They think that as long as the parliamentary institutions bring them a majority of votes they are willing to accept them. It is pointed out that in its internal affairs the Congress is controlled by a small clique which carries on the administration in a dictatorial way. In order to support this contention the solitary Bose incident of 1939 is generally brought forward. It is also pointed out, as an example of Congress fascism, that it tried to back up political agitation in the Indian states, on the one side, and to cut the ground under the Muslim League by trying to win over the Muslim masses, on the other. It is also pointed out that while the Congress was in office its ministries were responsible more to the zonal dictator than to their own legislatures. In fact, certain writers have gone to the extent of suggesting that the Congress, while in office, was actually engaged in a conspiracy to subordinate the state to the party organisation. These arguments are so arranged as to lead to the conclusion that as long as the Congress is there democracy cannot be properly worked in this country.

### THE CONGRESS CONSTITUTION

Perhaps no writer has entered into such elaborate condemnation of the Indian National Congress as Professor Coupland. He gives us a graphic description of the Congress' constitu-



tion, but strangely enough he has not been able to find many things in the Congress constitution which might give it an undemocratic character. The Congress constitution might be described as based on the principle of 'democratic centralism.' The local members elect the district committees, the district committees choose their representatives in the provincial Congress committees and the provincial Congress committees elect the All-India Congress Committee. The president is elected by a method of direct election. Coupland has singled out the method of appointment of the Working Committee as symbolic of the undemocratic character of the Congress. The Working Committee used to be elected till 1936 by the A.I.C.C. in a perfectly democratic manner. Since then it is being nominated by the president. The change cannot be considered as an undemocratic one. In almost all the democratic countries, the cabinet is more or less nominated by the Chief Executive. In America, the President himself selects his secretaries. In England, the Prime Minister nominates his cabinet. A sort of convention has come into existence by which all the tried leaders of the country are included in the Working Committee and all the provinces also are given a fair representation. Another point of criticism is that a new body, the parliamentary sub-committee, was brought into existence in 1937 to control the various Congress ministries. This step was taken in order to meet some extra-ordinary circumstances and, as I shall discuss later, there was nothing

undemocratic in this either.

Finally, Professor Coupland has taken up for criticism what he calls the unconstitutional, or super-constitutional, authority of Mahatma Gandhi in the Congress. As every one knows, Gandhiji is not even a four-annas member of the Congress. He does not hold any office in the Congress, but perhaps no decision can be taken by the Congress without his approval; and his advice is always binding on the Congress. Is this not an example of the Congress tendency towards dictatorship? If we analyse the fact, we shall find that Gandhiji exercises control over the Congress not because he has brought into existence a separate party of his own. He controls the Congress because he controls the Indian masses. As Jawaharlal once said, "if he dominates the Congress, it is because he dominates the masses." It was Gandhi who converted the Congress from a body of arm-chair politicians into a fighting organization. It was Gandhi who awakened the Indian masses out of their age-long slumber. It was Gandhi who gave us a new hope and a new vision. If such a man plays a dominating role in the Congress, it should hardly be a matter of surprise. Moreover, we have to keep in mind Gandhiji's authority over the Congress in two different capacities. Firstly, in normal times. In normal times Gandhiji tries to keep himself as far away from actively guiding the Congress organization as he possibly can. In 1934, when he felt that his influence was possibly becoming almost authoritarian, he resigned from the Congress.

It is only on special occasions, when there is a political campaign to be conducted, that Gandhiji takes the supreme command in his hands. In war times democracy has got to be compromised. An army cannot march in a democratic manner. Soldiers have to take orders from their general and follow him implicitly. His word is a law unto them. So whenever there is a civil disobedience campaign, Gandhiji naturally takes the command in his own hands, just as the commander-in-chief of any army would do. There is nothing in this that violates the spirit of democracy.

### CONGRESS UNITARIANISM

Professor Coupland has further brought forward the charges of unitarianism and totalitarianism against the Congress. He says that between 1937 and 1939 the Congress High Command concentrated all powers in its own hands, and deplores the fact that at a time when a federal experiment was being tried in the country, and when provinces were for the first time conceded autonomy, the Congress decided to violate the spirit of that autonomy by bringing together the administration of all the provinces under its centralised control. In this connection, we have to keep a number of facts in mind. It is true that the Congress created a parliamentary sub-committee and appointed what are maliciously called the zonal dictators, but this was to meet a number of extra-ordinary circumstances. People suspected that one of the motives of the Act of 1935 was to break up

the sense of national unity and instigate provincialism. The Congress, as an organisation devoted to the winning of independence, had to fight against that mentality. It was keen on the fact that provincialism was not permitted to raise its ugly head and come in the way of national freedom. Moreover, there was the fear that if provincial ministries were left for themselves they might develop to an inordinate extent the love of parliamentary working and might lose sight of the higher ideal. It is pointed out that whatever might be the reasons for this centralised control, it led to the loosening of the ministerial responsibility towards the legislature. It made the ministries responsible to the High Command rather than to the members of the provincial legislatures and ultimately to the provincial electorate. The way in which Professor Coupland has put it, the argument takes a very sinister shape.

I am perfectly sure that the learned professor is not unfamiliar with the working of the political parties in other parliamentary countries. This kind of national control over the provincial or state affairs is everywhere to be found. The candidates are generally put up by the all-national political parties and the members who vote for them, vote primarily for the political party and only secondarily for those individual candidates. We find this in America. We find this in England. We find the same thing in Canada and Australia, and, in fact, in all democratic countries of the world, where the parliamentary system has

come into existence. The circumstances in India were all the more favourable for the development of this tendency. Here, the all-India political parties had come into existence long before the provinces adopted any autonomous shape. With the exception of one or two purely provincial political parties almost all our political parties are national in complexion. In the case of the Congress, it was more true than in the case of any other political party anywhere in the world that the people had voted for the Congress and its programme as a whole rather than for any individual. The Congress as a body, therefore, was responsible to the entire electorate of the country. The Congress ministries could not have been held to be directly responsible to the electorate. They were mainly responsible to the Congress and only indirectly to the people. At the same time, it has to be pointed out that the Congress High Command never interfered in the selection of the provincial ministries or in their carrying out of day-to-day administration. It only maintained a kind of supervisory control and this was absolutely necessary under the circumstances. If the Congress had not done so, possibly, it would not have been true to its ideal.

### TOTALITARIANISM

Professor Coupland's charge of totalitarianism against the Congress is certainly most interesting. It is really gracious of him to concede that there is a difference between the Congress

totalitarianism and the totalitarianism as it had existed in some western countries. We are thankful to him for this, but he says that the underlying principle behind both is the same. The most out-standing example that he found of the Congress totalitarianism was the difference between the working of the ministries in the Congress provinces and in the non-Congress provinces. In the Congress provinces, he points out, the ministry was always homogeneous, one-party affair—the Congress refused to have a composite cabinet—and, since the Congress majority was not likely to be affected, a permanent fixture. On the other hand, in the non-Congress provinces, with the exception of the Panjab, there were coalition ministries, and there the basis of power was constantly shifting. This is pointed out as an example of the Congress totalitarianism. Professor Coupland expressed the opinion that in the non-Congress provinces the administration was really more democratic than in the Congress provinces! There is another mischievous suggestion behind this reasoning. Coupland suggests that the Congress was indifferent to minorities, whereas the other ministries, by taking minority parties with them, showed a greater interest in the well-fare of the minority communities. He points out a number of other things in order to support his thesis. He says that the Congress put up its flag at Government and Municipal buildings and that was an affront to other communities. The Congress patronised a song which it considered to be the national anthem, though it was full of

Sanskrit words and Hindu imagery The Congress tried to force it upon the Muslims and other communities. The Congress propaganda in favour of Sanskritised Hindi is also mentioned as an example of the Congress totalitarianism. It is pointed out that the situation was made much worse by the Congress support to the Vidya Mandir scheme. Coupland seems to countenance the charge, perhaps lightly made in some quarters, that the Congress even discriminated in the matter of civil services. In fact, no scruples seem to be able to restrain Professor Coupland in his vile charges against the Congress. He thinks that even the expansion of the rural development scheme was a subtle method on the part of the Congress to spread its tentacles of power in the villages. He crosses all limits of reasonableness when he says that the Congress actually was trying to build up an army of its own, and he draws the attention of his horrified reader to what happened in Italy and Germany, where such half-baked para-military formations were created and seems to think that a similar fate is awaiting this country also.

There is much in these charges which seems beneath criticism. A few points may be elucidated and they will show that the Congress was more willing to satisfy, than to hurt, the sentiments of the different communities. The Congress flag had come into existence long before the Congress was called upon to accept office in 1937. But when the Congress found that there was some opposition to it, it allowed other political parties also to hoist their own

flags side by side with the Congress flag and sometimes we had the interesting spectacle of four or five flags flying side by side ! Could such a thing be permitted in Germany, or in Italy, or even in England, or America ? Similarly, the Congress was not conscious of the opposition to the singing of the *Bande Matram*. For a long time the Muslim leaders had joined in it, but when the Congress found that it created opposition, it at first decided to limit it to the first two stanzas, and then dropped even those stanzas. Similarly, so far as the propagation of Hindi was concerned, it can only be an uninformed or pugnacious mind which can say that the Congress tried to propagate Sanskritised Hindi. What the Congress tried to do was to spread Hindustani, a via media between Hindi and Urdu, a simple language commonly spoken and commonly understood by the largest number of people in the country, both Hindus and Muslims. In this connection, this fact also may be kept in mind, that the Congress took some decisive steps in the matter only in Madras, where the Muslims are in a very small minority, and there also the teaching of Hindi was opposed not by the Muslims but by the non-Brahmin Justice party, which did so purely on political grounds.

Professor Coupland's use of the word totalitarianism in connection with the Congress is simply amazing. By totalitarianism we generally understand that authority which tries to bring under its control all the spheres of life, and which denies freedom and initiative to the



individual. It is in this sense that the word is used in the western countries. To talk of Congress as a totalitarian body is absurd. The Congress never tried to put restrictions on individual liberty. It had won elections on perfectly democratic lines and when it captured office in eight out of eleven provinces, it naturally wanted to forge a machinery of exercising supervisory control over their activities. As a matter of fact, as Mr. Munshi points out in a recent collection of essays, the Congress was anti-totalitarian rather than totalitarian, because it was fighting the totalitarianism of the government. It was the government which controlled all the sources of power and authority, the civil services, the police, the judiciary. The Congress had to fight for a transfer of power from British hands to Indian hands responsible to the Indian people. Mr. Munshi points out how the Bombay Congress ministry resisted totalitarianism of the Bombay government by acting as a single unit, by deciding all their policies behind closed doors, and by keeping as much power in their hands as possible. The result was that the Bombay cabinet was functioning just like the British cabinet or a dominion cabinet, drawing its strength from the majority party. The Congress ministries which fought against this totalitarianism were certainly more democratic than the coalition ministries in the non-Congress provinces, where the Governor generally played a dominating role, and the ministries could be pulled up and down by means of strings controlled by secretaries.

The charge that is most often brought against the Congress is that it refused to form coalition ministries. In this connection, we have to keep a few facts in our mind. Firstly, it has always been the practice in parliamentary countries that the party which wins the election forms a cabinet consisting of its own members. For example, if the Conservative party is able to obtain a majority of seats in England or if a Republican has been elected the President in America, they do not invite the members of the Liberal or Democratic or other political parties to join them in their administrative work. It is only in abnormal circumstances that coalition ministries are formed. In 1937, there was nothing in this country to suggest that the situation was abnormal. If there was anything abnormal in the Indian situation it strongly suggested the formation of homogeneous cabinets. The Congress had to face a very heavy task. It had to wrest power from the unwilling hands of the Governor and the bureaucracy. That could be done only by presenting a joint front. A coalition ministry can never present anything like a joint front. The Congress in 1937 was therefore bound to adopt the only recognised practice of parliamentary government, viz. that of making one-party cabinets. The Congress had no intention of over-riding the interest of the minorities. It claimed to represent all sections of the Indian nation. It has always had a large number of Muslims holding important offices within it. The parliamentary committee had Maulana-Abul

Kalam Azad as its president-convener. In almost all the Congress provinces, the ministries included a number of Muslim members. The Congress made it clear, time and again, that it wanted to do every thing that lay in its power to safe-guard the interests of the minorities. Under these circumstances, to intrepret the Congress decision to form hominogeneous cabinets as a part of its communal or anti-Muslim outlook seems to be not only misleading but mischievous.

The constitutional *pundits* tell us today, with all the wisdom of ages, that it was a great mistake on the part of the Congress not to have entered into a coalition with the Muslim League. But they forget that in 1937 the Muslim League was a very weak political organization. It was not able to capture more than 6% of the seats. In no province was the Muslim League able to form even a workable majority. If Muslim ministries could be formed in Punjab and Bengal it was by the Unionist Party on the one hand and the Krishak Praja Party on the other. Both Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan and Fazlul Haque contested against League candidates, and won. In Sind, it was a coalition ministry. In the N.W. Frontier province, which is over-whelmingly Muslim, a purely Congress ministry was formed. There is, thus, absolutely no support for the contention that the Congress was in a position, or would have acted wisely, in forming coalition ministries in 1937.

## POLICY IN INDIAN STATES.

There are two other charges which are generally brought forward against the Indian National Congress in order to dump it as a totalitarian body. Firstly, it is pointed out that the Congress tried to incite trouble, with a view to gain power, in the Indian States. This seems to be highly exaggerated. For a long time the Congress refused to do anything with the politics of the Indian States. The Congress leaders refused directly to meddle with it. In 1934, when a section of Congress-men wanted to take a more vigorous part in the politics of the states, the then President Babu Rajendra Prasad threatened to resign. Till 1937, the Congress had persistently adhered to its policy of non-intervention in the states. It had no intention of any kind of intervention in the affairs of the states. But the advent of provincial autonomy in British India was bound to affect the states politics too. British India and Indian states are so closely integrated with each other, geographically and culturally and economically, that it is impossible to divide them into two watertight compartments. Anything that happens in the British Indian provinces is bound to have a repercussion on the Indian states. So, when in 1937 some kind of responsible government was brought into existence in British India, naturally, it encouraged the movement of the Indian states people for greater constitutional rights. Throughout the Indian states we find the springs of a new life. In a number of states

there were even minor satyagrahas for the achievement of political rights. Now, the Congress did not directly participate in any of these movements. The Indian States Peoples' Conference did some thing, but the real work was done, in an isolated manner, by the 'praja-mandals' of the various states. If there was any intervention on the part of the British Indian leaders it was at the initiative of the Indian states authorities. For example, in Rajkot, the initiative was not taken by Gandhiji, or Vallabh Bhai Patel, but by the state authorities which invited the latter for solving their internal difficulties. It was only at the request of the Diwan of Rajkot that Vallabh Bhai Patel intervened. Similarly, in the Limbdi state, Mr. Munshi was invited by the state authorities. In both the cases the settlement did not work because the Political Department of the Government of India was not prepared to countenance any participation of British Indian politicians in the Indian states affairs. When Lord Linlithgow personally interfered on the occasion of Gandhiji's fast, it was against the advice of the Political Department. Another point which we have to keep in mind is that at this time even the Government of India was anxious that the Indian states might be dragged out of their antiquated mediæval autocracy, and that some kind of constitutional reforms might be started there. So, there was nothing antagonistic between the intentions of the Government of India and the work indirectly encouraged by

the Indian National Congress. The Congress certainly had no intention of doing anything to compromise the sovereignty of the princes.

### OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE LEAGUE

The second very serious charge against the Congress brought forward in support of its totalitarianism is that it tried to strike at the foundations of the Muslim League by trying to win over the Muslim masses. The Congress undoubtedly adopted mass contact programme immediately after it assumed the responsibility of office but this was quite in keeping with the policy pursued by the Congress throughout its long and chequered history. The communal question, as has been so often pointed out, is not a straight-forward tussle between the Hindus and Muslims, but is a triangular contest. It consists of the Hindu, the Muslim and the British arms, and the British arm, as is known to every tyro in Indian politics, has played a very important part. The Congress has been engaged in fighting against British imperialism, on the one side, and is trying to broad-base itself on the widest possible support of the masses, irrespective of their race or religion, creed or colour, caste or community, on the other. So, in 1937, when the Congress decided to take up its Muslim mass contact programme, it was only a part of its policy of spreading the national movement as far and wide as possible. In October 1937, the Congress Working Committee in its Calcutta meeting made it very clear that it considered it as its primary duty

to protect the rights of the minorities and to ensure the widest possible scope for the development of these minorities and their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation.

It has to be admitted that the programme did not prove to be very successful. The main cause of its failure was that a number of disgruntled leaders of the Muslim community, who had become chagrined against the Congress on account of being thrown out of the prospects of power, organised themselves to make it a failure. The Congress sincerity cannot be questioned. The back-ground was quickly changing. The Muslim League was becoming stronger and stronger. While the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution referred to above, Mr. Jinnah was declaring, at the League Conference, that the Muslims could expect neither justice nor fair-play under Congress governments, and both the Panjab and Bengal ministries, and even the Sadullah ministry in Assam, were gradually veering round the Muslim League. Within two or three months after the Lucknow session of the League Conference, over 170 new branches of the League were established, including 90 in the U.P. and 40 in Punjab, and more than a lac of members were enlisted in the U.P. alone. This however, extinguished the Congress hopes of obtaining the support of the Muslim masses, but did not deflect the Congress from its straight-forward course of action. In January

1933, Jawaharlal Nehru repeated the readiness of the Congress to 'go beyond justice to the minorities in order to inspire confidence'. In February 1933, at Haripura, the Indian National Congress confirmed the Working Committee resolution on minority rights and declared afresh that it regarded it as its primary duty and fundamental policy to protect the religious, linguistic, cultural and other rights of the minorities in India, so as to ensure for them in any scheme of government to which the Congress was a party, the greatest scope for their development and their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation. The Congress even tried to enter into a series of unity-talks with the President of the League. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote a number of letters to the Quaide-Azam. Gandhiji had prolonged meetings with him. Subhash Chandra Bose also paid him his homage. But the negotiations finally broke down because the League leader took up the impossible stand that the Congress should consider the Muslim League as the sole representative of the Indian Muslims. Thus came the parting of ways. All this testifies more to the eagerness of the Congress to come to an understanding with the League rather than to cut the ground under it and win over the Muslim masses. The Congress undoubtedly wanted to enrol as large a number of Muslims within the nationalist ranks as possible, but it was because it felt that it had a message and a mission for the masses and that the Muslims



had as much to gain by it as the Hindus. Its efforts were pure and above board. They were nationalistic rather than communal.

## CONGRESS OBJECTIVES

In fact, all this misrepresentation of the Congress has been made possible because of a mis-understanding of the Congress movement and a deliberate distortion of its motives. It has to be realised that the Congress came into existence long before the parliamentary institutions were established. It has to be fully understood that the Congress is a parliamentary body for fighting the movement for political freedom. This is the ultimate goal of the Congress policy. If the Congress some-times takes up the parliamentary programme it is only with a view to bring the desired goal of independence a little nearer. The Congress accepts office not with a view to gain temporary power, or to crush the minorities, but to bring the goal of independence nearer so that the power may finally be placed in the hands where it ought, in all fairness and justice, to be placed, in the Indian masses, and it cares as much for the interest of the minorities as for the interest of the majority community. While in office a number of governors testified to its non-communal character. The very fact that when the Congress was condemned by the Muslim League as anti-Muslim, the Hindu Maha Sabha was criticising it, on the other hand, as pro-Muslim and anti-Hindu is a standing testimony to its non-communal character. The Congress is not a political

party in the sense in which the political parties exist in the Western countries. It includes within its ranks the persons holding different political opinions. It is, really speaking, a medley of political parties. They are all united for the achievement of national freedom but on matters of social and economic policy they have sharp differences from each other. The Congress has parties within parties. There is the right wing of the Congress. There is the Congress Socialist party organized by Syt. Jai Prakash Narain and Acharya Narendra Dev. There was the Forward Bloc of Subhash Chandra Bose. Even the Communists were members of the Congress and participated in the deliberations of the historic August 1942 meeting of the A. I. C. C.. The Congress thus fosters, under its wide wings, all shades of political thought. I am perfectly sure that the moment national freedom is achieved the Congress will oblige its European critics like Schuster, Coupland and others, and will get disintegrated, and a number of robust independent political parties will rise, phoenix-like, out of its ashes.

### THE CHANGING PANORAMA

Similarly, within the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the other communal groups there are different shades of political thought. All these political parties have come into existence to achieve something more than merely political power in the provincial or central spheres of administration. The Indian National Congress is there to fight the battle

of freedom. The Muslim League was organised to ensure that the Muslim interests do not suffer and is carrying on its work in its own way. The Hindu Mahasabha is a doubly negative body. It wants to ensure the safety of Hindu interests as against Muslim encroachment, which it fears may become very effective with the growth of the nationalist movement. All these political parties are rapidly changing their complexion. The social and economic lines of division are becoming more important. As a matter of fact, none of these political parties is communal in the much abused sense of that word. They are all political parties, and if there is a true democratic constitution in this country, by which I mean freedom within and freedom without, I am perfectly sure these parties will immediately adjust themselves to the changed circumstances, and, within the twinkling of an eye, change themselves into political parties of a very different pattern. So far as the Congress, the most important of these political parties, is concerned, it has already declared, and repeated the declaration again and again, that it wants power not for itself but for the Indian masses. The Muslim League cannot continue its present composition and temper after an amicable settlement is reached with the other communities regarding the future position of the Indian Muslims. The Hindu Maha Sabha is much more ephemeral and is bound to dissolve into thin air the moment we have the fresh air of a free government in our country.

## Section B: Other Factors

### ETHNOLOGICAL DIVISIONS

Our critics do not stop there. They point out a number of other factors in order to weaken our case for democracy in India. It is pointed out that India is not only a land divided into two warring 'nations' but that it is "a congeries of nearly a dozen principal nations, each speaking a different language, each with its literary traditions of some distinction, each with memories of political independence and military glory" <sup>1</sup>. We are asked to think of India in terms not of a country but of a continent—very much resembling Europe—and are very confidently assured that but for the British, we would still have been grappling at each other's throat, the Maratha trying to overthrow the Rajput, the southerner chafing under the domination of the northerner, the Sikh trying to run away with the head of the Muslim. In fact, a writer like Guy Wint is prepared to look at the political chess-board of the twentieth century India with eighteenth century glasses and to represent to his credulous British readers that "the old combatants are in new garb"—"like the Mughal Empire, the Muslim League fights to maintain Muslim civilization paramount in the north; like the Mughals, it finds its natural allies in a faction of Rajput princes; the thrust and drive of militant Hinduism

1. Shuster and Wint: *India and Democracy*, p. 189.

comes, and is likely to come in increasing measure, from Maharashtra; Hyderabad, as in the eighteenth century, while seeking to extend its role, is full of foreboding" <sup>1</sup>.

The analogy crosses all limits of sense and is based on a most perverted reading of Indian history, past and present. The fact, however, cannot be denied that India has got her cultural differences. I can agree with the picture painted by Lionel Fielden, though I find it slightly over-done. "England and France", he writes, "or for that matter England and Germany, have more in common, by most tests—language, religion, customs, dress—,than have the fourteen millions of Hyderabad with the eight millions of Assam." The Panjabi whether Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, has a quite definite loyalty to his land—the Panjab. The Madrasis have a passionate love for their own country—Madras—and its customs, food and music. But there is something much deeper than these differences, which binds all the Indian people together, whether they belong to Hyderabad or Assam, Punjab or Madras. It is true that a Bengali can be more easily distinguished from a Panjabi than a Dutch from a Spaniard or an Italian from an Englishman. But these distinctions are due to the largeness of the country and the sharp differences in topography and climate. There are some social differences too. But they all sink under the heavy resemblances. Fundamentally, Indian culture is one. Analogy with Europe is most misleading.

1. Ibid, p. 192.

As Lionel Fielden points out, "Although some 150 languages are spoken in India, although tradition is strong and the racial ties close, although the religious cleavage is far freater than in the western world, and reacts more fiercely on everyday life, although the millions of Maharashtra are absolutely different from the millions of Bihar, there does exist in India a feeling of Indian entity, India as a country, which is absent in Europe."<sup>1</sup> This is not all due to British rule: this is inspite of the British rule. The unity of India is 'held firmly in the pattern of her history'. Unless some radical change is brought in the Indian psychology, nationalism will always be able to cut through provincial loyalties, and as long as it is so, provincialism can never be a barrier to the growth of Indian democracy.

### FERMENT AMONG THE MASSES

Then, it is pointed out that the Indian masses, both urban and rural, are seething with such discontent, such terribly explosive forces are simmering in the sub-terranean regions, that it is impossible to have that atmosphere of cool reason in the country in which democracy can get a real chance. The threat comes partly from urban labour, but to a much greater extent from the rural masses. With the widening of the franchise, the Kisan has become an active factor in Indian politics. Since more than 90 p.c. of the Indian population lives in villages, with the establishment of full democracy in

1. Lionel Fielden : *Beggar Thy Neighbour*.

India, he would naturally become the ultimate sovereign authority. Since he is largely illiterate, and if the present pace of literacy is maintained, he is not likely to become fully literate for another seven hundred years, he is bound to fall an easy prey to demagogic influences. Guy Wint draws a pathetic picture of the illiteracy and ignorance of the Indian masses, and then flares up: "This is the sovereign people to whom parliamentary institutions have been presented; the transaction suggests the gift of a powerful and complex engine to a child."<sup>1</sup> He mentions the phenomenal rise of Kisan Sabhas, particularly in Bihar and U.P., as an indication of the direction in which the wind is blowing. "Herein lies the real danger", he raises his finger of warning. "To a party which offers the abolition of landlordism, reduction of taxes, and a writing off of debt, they will give an attentive ear..... Farmers in desperate want understand little and care less about the refinements of a parliamentary system, its moderation, its delays, its need for compromise. They are the friends of direct action....."<sup>2</sup>

The whole account is based on a complete misreading of the character of the Indian peasant. Guy Wint has painted him in the colours of a Marxian wage-earner, highly class-conscious and bursting with violence and hatred to break the bonds of existing society. The Indian peasant, on the other hand, is almost

1. Schuster and Wint: *India and Democracy*, p. 197.

2. Ibid.

a placid current of cool water for flames of revolutionary ardour. He is conservative by instinct, and attached to notions of property, and even authority, being sacred. I do not say that he cannot be aroused to mass-action: he has played a growingly important part in the various campaigns of civil disobedience. He is intelligent: he is docile. He can be prepared to fight for a righteous cause, with righteous weapons. If the appeal is on religious grounds, it goes more directly to his heart; but he is insensitive to fanaticism. In most of the provinces, he is still politically very backward. But even if the picture painted by Guy Wint is true to the hilt, is that a ground for denying democracy to India? Through Democracy alone, which implies Education and Social Reform, can we hope to meet such a situation. The mass discontent in India is the outcome of a denial of her freedom. The more an attempt will be made to keep back freedom from India, the more widely and intensely the flames of insurrection will leap forth. To deny freedom to a country on the basis that it is not capable of freedom is to move in a vicious circle. A people cannot develop the capacity for freedom until they are free. We cannot expect an alien government, determined to maintain its hold over the country, to nourish the roots of democracy. During the brief period, between 1937-39, when we had a very limited democracy in operation in certain provinces, the first steps were taken towards spreading adult literacy and organizing a



net-work of compulsory primary education. The Wardha scheme of education was meant to revolutionize the educational and social life of the entire country. But quickly the curtain was rung down and education was submerged in the beatings of the war-drums. No, unless we can secure for the people what they want, not only bread but enlightenment and self-respect, which can come only through democracy, we cannot help the popular ferment frittering itself in futile agitation. Democracy, on the other hand, would mean the proper harnessing of terrific sources of energy in the country.

### NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

But, the exasperated critic might finally turn up, what about the national psychology? Is the Indian temperament suited to democracy? Has India ever known democratic institutions? Would some kind of benevolent despotism not be the best form of government for such a vast country like India? In a country where men cannot get on well together even in private life, lack the art of conciliation, are hardly public-spirited or businesslike, are easily carried away by emotion, and are given to putting logic before commonsense, a liberal system of government would be a misfit. "A people", says Guy Wint, with a sneer, "which is perplexed in managing smoothly its minor affairs is likely to shipwreck when engaged on greater undertakings." But this account hardly does justice to the Indian character. Indians have eminently displayed the qualities which serve as the

foundation of democracy. But if they lack in some of them even to-day, the only way to develop them is to have a real experience of democracy. The only cure for the ills that are found in a body-politic, in the absence of democracy, is democracy itself. Democracy has its drawbacks, some of them very serious ones, but what is the alternative? What other system is there which will respect the human worth as much as a democratic system?

The argument that democracy is against the national psychology of the Indians goes counter to the whole trend of opinion expressed by nationalist India during the last fifteen years of world-crisis. She protested when the infant democratic experiment in China was being hacked into bits by Japanese aggression—when her present masters seemed to be gloating over it; she cried when Mussolini, in the face of the whole civilized world, raped Abyssinia and laughed with a demon-like laughter, she felt the wound deep in her own heart when the Spanish democracy was given its death-blow, and when England and France looked on gaping; she chafed and fumed, when Hitler marched on Austria and devoured bits of Czechoslovakia. It ill-behoves the supporters of the pro-fascist, anti-democratic, British conservatism to say that the land of Gandhi and Nehru lacks in the national psychology necessary for democratic institutions. In the present war too, India has consistently taken a stand for democracy. As the Congress statement on the outbreak of the war pointed out, if the issue was democracy and

a world-order based on democracy, India was intensely interested in it. "A free democratic India", the statement promised, "will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation. She will work for the establishment of a real world-order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity". The promise stands. But a slave India cannot fulfil that promise. With democracy and freedom within, India is bound to play a leading role in the fight for democracy and freedom, which is being fought all over the world to-day. The vicious circle has to be broken somewhere—and a fresh line drawn. The success of democracy depends upon conditions which it alone can bring about. Communal differences, ethnological divisions, ferment among the masses, a national psychology unsuited to democracy—these are all obstacles as well as a justification for progress on democratic lines.

## CHAPTER SIX

# Present Phase : Political Deadlock : The Way Out

### HOW THE DEADLOCK CAME

There have been few periods in Indian history when the relations between India and Britain were more cordial than in the years 1934-9. By the year 1934 the second Civil Disobedience movement had fizzled out. On October 18, 1934, the Congress formally decided to abandon civil disobedience and adopt a parliamentary programme. Congress leaders, like Bhulabhai Desai, Satyamurti, Pant and others could now be seen, mixed up, on the floor of the central legislature, with British officials. In 1937, the Congress fought the provincial elections, and won a thumping majority of votes in a majority of provinces. The Congress success might have made a few British diehards uneasy, but it seems to have created a very good impression on the British public mind, which naturally has a quick understanding for the language of democracy. The Congress refusal to accept office, even when it had won the elections, created a sense of disappointment in England—and though the British Government sanctioned the formation of interim ministries, it seems to have been

quite sincere in persuading the Congress to accept office. When the Congress wanted an assurance that the governors would not normally exercise their special powers, both the Viceroy and the Secretary of State came half-way to meet them. The Congress moved the other half of the way. Interim ministries were set aside, and the Congress was installed in office.

Provincial autonomy had more or less a smooth sailing during its brief life of twenty-seven months. The Governors kept to their word. The work of cabinet-making could be undertaken by the Congress premiers without let or hindrance from the Governors. The Congress included Muslim ministers in all provinces except in Orissa. When a number of Muslim associations there waited in deputation on the Governor, he informed them that it was not practicable in all circumstances to include a member of the community and told them that he did not think the legitimate interests of the Muslim community would suffer as a consequence. Once in office, the Congress was allowed to develop collective responsibility. The relations between the Governors and Ministers were perfectly cordial. Twice, when a crisis seemed to threaten the working of Provincial Autonomy, it could be tided over by the presence of goodwill on both sides. The U. P. Governor told the Assembly, "When everything is changed the Governor too is not the Governor known to the former constitution". An Indian Minister from Madras, Dr. Rajan, testified to the part the

Governor had played in all the provinces. "I am not letting out any secret of the Cabinet", he said, "in informing you that His Excellency has been our friend, guide and philosopher". The Governor of Bengal told the police that though he was in possession of statutory special powers for protecting their interests, he shared this power with the ministers, and that the services could approach him for protection, not directly, but through the ministers only. "In the smooth cooperation of ministers with British Governors and civil servants there seemed to be the sign of the rapprochement between Indians and British which would be the surest guarantee of the success of the constitutional experiment, and there took place in London a noticeable rise in the prestige of India and the goodwill towards its aspirations". It was against this azure blue background of peace that the clouds of war broke in September 1939.

One strong bond between India and England during the years was the community of outlook on international affairs. In India, thanks to the vehement and persistent writings of Jawaharlal Nehru, there was an immense volume of anti-fascist feeling. We condemned the British foreign policy to the extent to which it truculated to fascist aggression, but we never lost our sympathy for Britain, which we thought to be doubly a victim, of circumstances and of her own misguided leadership. In Japan's invasion of Manchuria, Italy's imperialist venture in Abyssinia, the fascist help to Spanish insurrectionaries. Hitler's 'anschluss' with

Austria and absorption of Czechoslovakia, our sympathies were consistently with the victims of aggression. In march 1939, however, when Britain decided to stand up to Hitler, and gave an assurance to Poland, our admiration for her grew, and when in September 1939, she declared war on Nazi Germany, we supported her stand most enthusiastically.

The outbreak of the war was, thus, expected to cement the Indo-British relations, as nothing else had done. Our two leading statesmen, Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, gave spontaneous expression to their views. "I am not just now thinking of India's deliverance", Gandhiji said in a public statement, which he gave immediately after interviewing the Viceroy, "it will come but what will it be worth if England or France fall.....?" The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution, in which it said, "The Congress had repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It.....must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it." That was the moment when with one supreme gesture the British could have won our goodwill and carried us wholeheartedly into the war along with them.

### WHY THE DEADLOCK ?

But that gesture did not come. Not because the British were panic-struck, though their

declaring India a belligerent country, promulgation of ordinances and the passing of the Government of India Act Amending Bill might create that impression—the British are the last people on earth to get struck with panic—but because they did not want to part with power. That is the simple and the direct explanation. The Congress was not willing to be satisfied with anything less. It wanted the British claims to fight for democracy to be substantiated by their policy in India. The Congress resolution was very clear. "If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination.....A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression". The Working Committee further invited the British Government "to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy, and imperialism .....and.....in particular how these aims are going to apply to India....." The British Government was not willing to face the issue squarely.

For sometime a friendly tug of war went on. The British Government thought that the Congress would climb down. The Congress hoped that the relentless pressure of international events would force the British hands. Gandhiji was willing, in September 1939, to



offer unconditional help to the British Government in their war-efforts, if the Congress was permitted just enough control over the Central administration so as to enable responsible ministries in the provinces to function in a responsible manner—for in the absence of this provincial ministries were fast becoming mere blind agents for carrying out the policies and programme of an irresponsible centre—and if they declared that India would be a free and democratic country at the end of the war. But when this offer was rejected—and it became clear that the British were not willing to trust the Congress or, for that matter, any representative government at the Centre—the Congress had no alternative but to withdraw its ministries.

The resignation of the Congress ministries came as a surprise and a shock to the British. It seems to have steeled the British heart. They felt it to be like a stab in the back. They thought that the Congress was trying to exploit their difficulties and playing a treacherous game. Some irresponsible utterances on the part of a few Congressmen gave them a handle to condemn the entire Congress policy as that of favouring the enemies of Britain. The Congress does not seem to have appreciated the grim intensity of the situation. The instances in which its threat of resignation had brought a response of compromise from the British were still fresh in its minds: it did not realize that the British were now in a different psychology, faced as they were with the problem of life and death. The Congress very sincerely adopted a

policy of non-embarrassment, and went on hoping that any moment the British heart would melt and their reason would glow with the realization of the truth and justice of India's demand. It has also to be realized that the Congress was then in unpredictable difficulties. Its brief spell of power had unleashed forces of intense opposition. The princely order looked askance at the Congress motives: the Muslims were gradually moving on the war path: the Hindus also were withdrawing their support from the Congress and, as a reaction to Muslim League propaganda, adhering to Hindu communal organizations: the left wing of the Congress was seething with a spirit of revolt: the extreme right wing was dying for co-operation with the British and was anxious to get back to power and post even if that was truncated and trivial: the masses with their instinctive hatred of the British were developing the unhealthy psychology of looking at the enemies of Britain as their friends and felt a deep spiritual satisfaction, of a very perverted type, with each stroke of Axis victory.

But for the leadership of Gandhiji, political India would have gone to tatters under the first impact of war. Gandhiji tried to yoke together the various elements. Of course, Subhash Bose escaped, and he did everything that he could, through the Axis radio, to undermine Gandhiji's constructive work in India. Mr. Jinnah also refused to leave his new position of power—the war had suddenly made him extremely important and now the British government looked

upon him as their only hope and support. E. Gandhiji could carry the rest of the count with him. He first evolved the formula non-cooperation with the war-effort on ground of pacifism. For sometime the Congress High Command itself, in its desire for compromise, showed willingness to part company even with Gandhiji. On 28th July 1940, the A.I.C.C. at its Poona session, declared itself in favour of violent defence against external aggression or internal disorder. This only brought forward the "August Offer" from the tacit Viceroy. The Viceroy graciously offered to expand his Executive Council, and to supplement it by a National Defence Council, but refused to make it responsible, and simultaneously announced that the Indians would have the right to frame their own constitution at the end of the war. The disillusioned Congress High Command once more weakly gathered itself under Gandhiji's lead and carried on his individual civil disobedience programme. The Congress refusal to co-operate with the British Government and unwillingness to embarrass their war-effort merely created a greater distrust in the minds of the latter. The British policy of refusing to part with power deepened the sense of national frustration.

### CRIPPS OFFER

Japan's sudden attack on American harbour on December 7, 1941, followed by a trail of Japanese victories in the Pacific, gave another shock to the British authorities in India. They ha

hardly counted on that, and if they had sometimes been made conscious of the prospect, they had taken it lightly. But when one country began to fall after another, Hongkong and Singapore, Malaya and Burma began to slip out of the allied control all too rapidly, and the Nippon stood knocking at the undefended north-eastern frontiers of India, the British Government was forced to think in terms of a compromise. In March 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps, the accredited messenger of the War Cabinet, personally flew to India and fell headlong into a series of negotiations with her political leaders. Hope once more stirred warmly in the Indian hearts. There was a flutter of expectancy. We felt that the British had after all seen sense. Cripps began his first statement with the announcement that the first thing India could do after the war was to declare herself completely independent of the British. That was very refreshing. But what about the present, the nation asked? Cripps was silent over that point. He had said in his first talk with Maulana Azad, the Congress President, that there would soon be a national government in India which would function as a Cabinet and that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King in England *vis à vis* his Cabinet. But as negotiations proceeded, there was a progressive deterioration in the British Government's attitude. Maulana Azad in his last letter to Cripps wrote that the Congress was yet prepared to assume responsibility provided a truly

National Government is formed', and was 'prepared to put aside for the present all questions about the future'. On the following day, Cripps hurriedly declared that the negotiations were at an end and that even that post-dated cheque that he had offered was being withdrawn ! That left India gaping. So, was the Cripps offer also a snare, just a part of the Amery-Churchill propaganda to broadcast the internal differences of India before the world ? For sometime we could not believe it. But astonishment soon gave way to a sense of shock. Shock was converted into frustration. Frustration into anger. Anger into the happenings of August 1942 and the following months.

### WHO WAS TO BLAME ?

It is useless to apportion blame for the failure of the Cripps Mission. Even now there is a strong section of opinion in the country which believes that the Cripps Offer ought to have been accepted. But who rejected it ? Did the sponsor of the offer himself not throw it away like a bashful maiden throwing away an illegitimate child ? Negotiations were steadily proceeding on. Congress came out with one compromise formula after another. Cripps said everything depended on mutual adjustment between the Congress and the Government of India. The latter never came openly into the field—though, there is a suspicion, it was busy pulling strings from behind. A straightforward assurance from the Governor General would have eased the situation, but the latter sat

mum and glum, like a perfect Greek statue. Negotiations then entered into an endless circle, and finally got exploded. But, while parting, we can apply one test to the Cripps offer. "The present deadlock", Cripps himself had said in the House of Commons, on October 26, 1939, "is due to the uncompromising attitude of the British Government and not to Congress, which is putting forward the just demands of the Indian people..... If the British Government is fighting for democracy, imperialism must end in India..... The Viceroy's suggestion of a consultative committee chosen and concocted by himself is nothing but an insult to the Indian people, who demand the right of self-determination. The argument that self-government is impossible in India because of the communal difficulty is invalid." Did the British Government try to meet, through the Cripps offer, the 'just demands of the Indian people', which the Congress was representing? Did they try to relax, even by one jot or tittle the strangle-hold of their imperialism in India? Did they offer anything more than merely a consultative committee to the Indians during war-time? Did they propose an absolute and unconditional acceptance of the Indian right to self-determination? Did they not try to rake up the communal difficulties and base the future of India on a systematic atomisation of the entire country in the name of satisfying the Muslim interests? In the answers to these questions lies the key to the failure of the Cripps Mission. The dead-

lock was not only continued, but deepened—because the British Government in a moment of supreme danger, had once again, refused to part with power.

## PROSPECTS OF SETTLEMENT

But is that the reason to lose hope? Political deadlocks are not new in Indo-British relationship: only the present one is more prolonged and intense. Whenever the Indian demand for self-determination has been very insistent and vigorous and the British instinct for holding on really strong, there has been a political deadlock. Gradually, it has melted away by a relaxation of the national demand on the one hand, and a desire to compromise on the other. During the long history of Indian nationalism, periods of reconciliation have alternated with periods of conflict. In fact, the political history of India during the last thirty-five years seems to have been moving in certain well defined cycles. There is generally an upsurge of national life, which finds expression in cultural or artistic renaissance, literary revival or social reform. This is followed by an intensification of the British effort to disrupt the ranks of Indian nationalism. Some new complexity is introduced in their political struggle. In 1909, it was the principle of separate electorates, in 1930 the 'problem of princes, in 1942, the indirect support given to the Muslim League demand for Pakistan. The Indian nationalists advance to meet the challenge and succeed to a certain extent in reuniting

their ranks. Out of unity emerges another political upheaval, generally a pair of political movements, the first of an experimental type and successful in creating some effect, the second a more desperate plunge and ending in a wide rupture. The Congress-League Pact of 1916 served the background for the Home-Rule agitation, which brought His Majesty's historic declaration of 1917, in the wake of which there came the N.C.O. movement. The unity which the country forged out of an united opposition to the Simon Commission created the proper atmosphere in which the C. D. movement of 1930 was launched. It did not fail to produce the desired effect on British public opinion. Lord Irwin hastened to patch up a truce with Gandhiji. But the tide of national upheaval could not be resisted. There followed the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932, which ended in a complete breaking up of Indo-British cordiality.

Similarly, the political discontent in the early forties created the twin movements of Individual Satyagraha of 1940 and the 'Quit India' of 1942. During the period of frustration following the failure of these larger movements, the N.C.O. of 1921, the C.D. of 1932 and the Quit India campaign of 1942, the internal conditions in the country also show signs of intense deterioration. But on the one side the constitutionalists—in 1924, Moti Lal Nehru and C.R. Das; in 1934, the entire right wing of the Congress, in 1945, Rajaji and the Sapru Committee—proceed to patch up the broken vase



of Indo-British relations, on the other, Gandhiji restores, and gradually builds up, by means of his constructive programme, the national will to freedom. We stand, today, at the end of the latest cycle in our political history, of moving through the well-known channels of agitation, upheaval, frustration, constitutionalism, constructive programme. Each cycle seems to end exactly where it began. But if we look into things closely, we can see that the wheel revolves not only round its own axle, but that with each turn of the wheel, the nation is marching forward on the road towards freedom.

British unwillingness to part with power is not an absolute factor. It has been modified in the past, and can be modified again today. It is bound to crumble under the impact of a fresh series of circumstances, just as it came to life under the protection of an opposite series. The British refusal to part with power could be glorified into a creed, because they realized that the Congress was weak, and with some real show of strength and, as possibly Amery and Maxwell chuckled, by cleverly derailing it off the track of non-violence, they could crush it. They also found that the Muslim League, due to its own selfish reasons, was willing to add a helping hand. They expected that the world could be duped with false propaganda. They knew that the public opinion at home could be kept quiet in the name of war. In August 1942 and the succeeding months, the Government did its worst. White terror reigned supreme in the country. School girls were flogged, and

college students machine-gunned. People who had not the remotest connection with politics were summarily imprisoned. The nation was, for the moment, thrown into a bewildering confusion. In face of contradictory instructions coming from unknown sources, the masses lost balance and, in many cases, resorted to violence. That gave a handle to the government to suppress the whole rising ruthlessly. By October there was a slump. Patriotism felt scared. Nobody knew what to do. Gandhiji's fast, in February 1943, again electrified the situation and restored the national character and self-respect. Like Christ, he atoned for the sins of the misguided people. The Government felt condemned. The world opinion began to swing in the other direction. Louis Fischer, Pearl S. Buck, Mrs. Gunther and others did much to clarify the nationalist position in America. Public opinion in England also became more critical of their Government's policy. Wind was taken out of the sails of the Government propaganda regarding Congress responsibility for the 1942 disturbances and its pro-Axis character. The stalemate, however, continued. The Muslim League, which had exhumed froth and foam when the Congress was in power stood away from the scene with a dignified aloofness and, beyond issuing a few critical statements, refused to help the Government in suppressing the national upheaval: there was even a talk at one time that the Muslim League was thinking of taking a plunge. The Government had clearly lost in the long run.

## STRENGTH OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

During the trial of strength between Indian nationalism, deprived of its leadership and deliberately misguided, and the British imperialism in India, fighting with a grim determination, a number of illusions were cleared off and lessons learnt. The first wave of satisfaction ran throughout the country when the patriots found the Muslims in general extremely sympathetic and waiting for a sign from their leaders to join in the upsurge. But the sign did not come. The Muslim leadership was too shrewd and calculating. It was able to retain throughout its firm hold over the Muslim masses. The nationalist movement could not carry the Muslim masses off the *terra firma* of inaction to which they had been tied by their leaders. Hindu Mahasabha felt shaky, and its leaders were for sometime forced to adopt a strong language against the actions of the Government. But at the same time, though the dream of the nationalists that the whole country would rise in rebellion as one man did not materialize, the strength of their sentiment was fully displayed. With the Government adopting all the ruthless weapons of modern warfare against an unarmed people, it was little wonder that the movement went underground. But for months, secret bulletins continued to gush forth from all corners of the country, thousands and thousands of people kept an all-night vigil over the battle of freedom, and disturbances continued. Gradually, the sense of frustration began to deepen.

Some began to think that the fight for freedom had been pushed back by half a century. But when Gandhiji fasted in February 1943, hope once more began to surge forth. Within a month of Gandhiji's release in May 1944, the country had fully regained its self-confidence. A year had hardly run out, when we not only once more talked of nation's freedom, but almost felt it in the atmosphere. The conviction is growing that the day, when a new morning in the country will glow with the virgin rays of freedom, is not far off.

The Indian national movement has become too strong to be crushed: what is significant is that the British people have started realizing it. There may be a temporary period of lull following a terrible repression, but simmering once again begins the moment the effort is relaxed. Old patriots are jailed: new patriots immediately come forth. With every challenge that it receives from the British, the national movement comes out stronger. When the Government posed to be the guardian of agricultural interests as against the middle-class political agitators, the Congress proceeded to bring the vast agricultural masses within its embrace. When the British threw furtive glances at the Muslims, the Congress was able to absorb the best of them. Due to sheer incidental circumstances, the Congress was unable to carry the Muslim masses with them in 1942. All efforts to win over the scheduled castes have got wrecked at the rock of nationalism. The Congress has been a

through the facade of the Indian States rulers; and has the undivided loyalty of the people of the Indian States. During the last few years Indian Government servants too, including those in the military services, to the last man, have developed a longing for and a faith in Indian freedom. One is surprised to find that whereas fifteen years back the Congress was seriously divided on the issue of dominion status versus complete independence, today even the most liberal of liberals stands for the latter. The Muslim League also stands for a free India. Even diehards like Firoz Khan Noon have begun to take India's freedom for granted!

#### CHANCES OF COMMUNAL SETTLEMENT

But the acid test possibly is the communal problem. Will the Indian nationalism be able to tide over the almost insuperable barriers raised by the powers that be to obstruct it, and arrive at some kind of settlement? I am not pessimistic. The Indian nationalism has always kept pace with the British efforts to win over the Muslims. When Sir Stafford Cripps lifted the fluffy, inchoate, elusive demand of Pakistan to the region of practical politics, Rajaji immediately came out with his offer to steal the thunder out of the Cripps scheme. He entered into a hurricane campaign to win over the nationalist opinion in favour of a formula granting the right of secession to contiguous Muslim districts in the north-west and east of India on the basis of a plebiscite. In March 1943, he was able to win over Gandhiji to his point of

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The important point to be noted in connection with Gandhi-Jinnah talks is that though Mr. Jinnah protested strongly against Gandhiji's proposals, contained in his letter dated September 24, 1944, he did not finally throw them away. In his letter, dated September 25, he

wrote, "But now you have, in your letter of September 24, made a new proposal of your own on your own basis, and the same difficulties present themselves to me as before, and it is difficult to deal with it any further unless it comes from you in your representative capacity." In his letter, dated September 26, he wrote, "..... it was not possible to negotiate and reach an agreement unless both parties were fully represented. For it is a one-sided business, as it will not be binding on any organization, in any sense whatever, but you would as an individual only recommend it, if any agreement is reached, to the Congress and the country, whereas it will be binding upon me as the president of the Muslim League. I cannot accept this position. I hope you do see the unfairness and the great disadvantage to me, and it is simple and elementary for any one to understand." It was here that the final break in the negotiations came.

They parted with much goodwill. "There is no cause for disappointment", said Gandhiji. "The breakdown is only so-called. It is an adjournment *sine die*.....". I do not understand the Communist cry: "They must meet again." No use will be served in their entering once again in the same labyrinth of arguments and counter-arguments. We have enough of it every day going on at a lesser plane. They can now meet again, and shall meet again, only under changed circumstances, when the atmosphere will have a flavour of reality about it, to discuss the actual sharing of power. Mr.

Jinnah has, with terrific shrewdness and wisdom, and patience and integrity, built up the power of the Muslim League to such an extent that there will never again be any danger to Islamic culture in India, if there ever was, and I personally think, on the basis of the predominantly Hindu character of our national movement, that there was. I do not know if India is ever going to be divided into two separate states, independent of, and at logger-heads, against each other. Perhaps we have enough statesmanship in the country to tide over such a catastrophe. I do not even know if the Muslim League is going to survive by many years our attainment of complete freedom. It was built up on a negative ideal—to see that the Muslim culture is not endangered by the rising tide of nationalist democracy in India. The moment it would have secured its objective it would vanish into thin air. But till that moment arrives, it must remain very much alive and kicking and Mr. Jinnah's dynamic personality has infused it with sufficient strength to carry on that mission to a successful end.

Mr. Jinnah has not gone beyond the Lahore resolution. All that he has done is to give it flesh and blood and to clothe it in a new spirit. As such, it appears very much inflated. Gandhiji is willing to concede the substance of the Lahore resolution. If it is so, mere academic controversies regarding India being a nation or a congeries of nations, or the difference of opinion regarding the nature and form or prac-



ticability of plebiscite or the controversial question of the delimitation of boundaries, are not likely to come in the way of a final settlement. The Congress, by its steadfast devotion to the cause of freedom, under perils and temptations, and the League, by its equally strong adherence to the demand for the preservation of the Muslim rights, under the odium of great unpopularity—have both passed through the oblatory fire of suffering and will meet as soon as the suitable moment comes. They cannot withstand the onrush of historical and popular forces: India has to become free: democracy has to evolve its own particular pattern in India: the Muslims must be given the right of self-determination. These appear to be axiomatic truths: only they have not yet been fully realized.

### INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

It is good that we are now getting out of the false hope of securing Indian freedom through international pressure, and realizing more and more that the problem is really one of settling Hindu-Muslim relations on the one side and the Indo-British relations on the other, these two, of course, being linked up in a sort of triangle and that if we face it up squarely and increase the national strength sufficiently to bend the British will, the problem is not insoluble. Regarding the matter of external pressure on the British, there have been two schools of thought in our country. Subhas Chandra Bose and men of his ideology—and I

cannot say Bose is absolutely unrepresentative of Indian public opinion, since he once rose, and was twice elected, to the eminent 'gadi' of the Congress President—believed that India could be freed by Japanese arms. That hope now seems to be doomed. But even when such a belief was very much widespread, many of us thought that if the Japanese at all entered India, their motive could never be that of bringing freedom for us on a Japanese platter. Others have entertained a hope that the allies of Great Britain, the valiant China, the triumphant Russia and highly international-minded America would bring pressure upon England to concede us our just demand. At a moment we actually believed that the Indian freedom was vital to allied war-effort. I have an idea that in that desperate hour, when Gandhiji was everyday raising the tempo of his 'Quit India' urge, he had not yet lost all hopes in the United Nations. Somehow or other, he never seemed to have felt that the United Nations would allow England to deal single-handedly with the growingly tense Indian situation. There were hopes everywhere in India that the mediation of the United Nations, particularly of America and perhaps of Russia also, would avert the impending crisis. But England, instead of giving Gandhi a chance of convincing her statesmen of the correctness of his stand, precipitated the crisis with the arrest of leaders. Hope, however, dies hard. When Gandhiji fasted, once again hopes in American intervention rose. Our simple-minded patriots

thought that America would never let Gandhiji die in prison. Gandhi survived the fast—not due to American intervention but due to sheer force of his indomitable will. Perhaps America heaved a sigh of relief when he was saved—but America was not willing to save Gandhiji's life at the cost of Anglo-American relations : politics is thicker than morality. Even now the hopes have not died completely. When Drew Pearson published Phillip's letter to Roosevelt, once more there was a flutter of hope. When Roosevelt succeeded in the election, people in India said, "Now, now, is the time when he can speak his mind." But his mind on India remained as close as ever. People, again, began building hopes on Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit's American tour. It certainly enlightened American public opinion about India—that was not bad—but to think that India could get freedom by any of these devious methods is to live in a fool's paradise.

The pressure of world-opinion, however, has its own merits, and is bound to reflect, in the long run, on the British policy. Great Britain is no longer an isolated country—no country in the world is isolated today—and cannot ignore for a long time what America, or Russia, or even China, think of the issue of India's freedom. Some people in some countries can be fooled for sometime, but not all people in all countries for all time. During the last five years a tremendous world opinion has been formed in India's favour. Some of the leading American statesmen—Willkie, and Wallace and

Sumner Welles—have given their unequivocal support to India's freedom. Russia seems to be stolid and silent, but the recent utterances of her Commissar of Foreign Affairs, M. Molotov, at San Francisco, when he talked of India in a manner which embarrassed Stettinius and made Eden's face flush, is a clear indication of what she thinks on the subject. Marshal and Madam Chiang Kai Shek have always been valiant supporters of India's political demands. There is a tremor of sympathy for India's aspiration throughout the Middle East and in all the small powers of the world. Even in England, friendly public opinion is fast gathering round India. I have talked with Englishmen in India—not chips of the official block, who get dyed in prejudice and purblindness as soon as they cross the Suez, but genuine Englishmen, the masses of England, whom war and conscription have rooted out of their homes and brought to India—and they stand wholly for our freedom. The recent British elections in which the Labour Party was able completely to rout the Conservatives, is also a pointer in the same direction. Such a great pressure of world opinion is bound to have its reaction on the official British attitude towards India.

### A STRAIGHT DEAL WITH BRITAIN

The main conflict, however, is between India's desire to be free and Britain's determination to hold on, between Indian nationalism and British imperialism, and has to be resolved on that plane. By no clever solution

of the inter-Indian issues. can we evade the direct problem : perhaps no solution is possible until that central hurdle is cleared. Similarly, by no clever manipulation of world opinion can we think of obtaining our freedom : the opinion that we can gather in our favour will hardly be effective for solving our problem. A straight deal with Britain—that alone will disentangle the knot. But what shall be the procedure? Will it be by means of a violent upheaval? I have not the slightest faith in that way. Moreover, it seems thoroughly impracticable. Not only in Indian circumstances. Anywhere in the world, a violent resistance to a government which can command a thousand times greater violence, has ceased to be a practicable proposition. Greece is a recent example. Events that happened, or mis-happened, in our country in August 1942 and the following excited months, also are an eye-opener. I do not suggest that the only alternative is abject surrender. Fortunately, we have amongst us that pole-star of undying hope, Gandhi. He has shown us the way. It is through his technique of non-violence that he has been able to lift the country out of the sloth and despondency of utter demoralization. Civil Disobedience can only be the last weapon. Moreover, it requires a special atmosphere which is lacking in the country to-day. The non-violent way to develop the national will to freedom is the constructive programme. Gandhiji, in emphasising that, is striking at the right chord. Let us develop our national will to freedom, to

strength, to conciliation--and we shall be generating that oxygen in which the British desire to do justice to India will burn like a bright flame. In that case, we shall not have begged our freedom from the British, but deserved it, and obtained it by sheer right, and the strength behind that right.

### THE CONSTITUTIONAL WAY

In the meantime the constitutional 'pundits' can keep their mid-night lamps burning. A constitution, in order to be lasting, must be the true reflex of the national will at the moment and the national dreams and possibilities of the future. What appears so divergent and even antagonistic, a constitution tries to harmonize. The task of framing the future constitution of the country will rest upon the Indians themselves. The British cannot go back upon what they possibly thought to be only an idle chatter in August 1940, and what was put forward to mislead world-opinion in the loudly trumpeted Cripps Offer of March 1942, namely, that Indians have been given for all time to come the right to frame their own constitution. There will be no more all-white Commissions, or Round Table Conferences in St. James's palace or Joint Parliamentary Committees to discuss and debate over the Indian constitutional problems. That is a world as dead as Queen Anne. Our new constitution has got to be drafted here, at New Delhi, or Sevagram or Malabar Hills, and will be inaugurated by a treaty with the British, or without it. Of course, a number of things have

to be threshed out. What shall be the machinery for the framing of the constitution ? Will it be a Constituent Assembly based on universal franchise, or a constitution-framing body consisting of representatives of provincial legislatures ? What shall be the minority representation on that constitution-making body ? Will it proceed on the basis of the provinces as the autonomous units and bring about a weak agency centre into existence, or shall authority percolate from the centre to the provinces ? Shall we have a federal constitution, or an unitary one ? Shall there be one federation, or two, or many ? These, and many others, are the questions which we have to answer, and answer in a way so as to meet the supreme necessity of the momentous hour, and to provide a real democratic framework of government, a framework of government based not on the spirit of partisan rule but on a sincere effort to meet the largest good of the largest number, not to betray any minority, however unimportant, any interest, however trivial, any outlook, however radical. The Sapru Committee has already been through the fiery ordeal. Others too have to walk through the flames. We have to strike, and go on striking till the solution is found.

**PART III**

**THE SOLUTION : PARTITION OR FEDERALISM**





## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Pakistan: Inner Contradictions

#### DELIMITATION OF BOUNDARIES

We have considered the psychology which led to the Muslim League demand of Pakistan. It was under abnormal conditions, psychological as well as political that the demand was advanced. Assuming that the demand is just and reasonable let us try to find out how far it is practicable. The first problem that arises is that of the delimitation of the boundaries of Pakistan. Let us try to get into the meaning of the League resolution. It says that 'geographically contiguous units are to be demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial re-adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states.' These are the words of the resolution. The Muslim League has not tried to throw any further light on the meaning of these words. Asked as late as April 1943 as to what were going to be the boundaries of Pakistan, Mr. Jinnah replied that the Muslim League had no map of Pakistan.

The meaning of the resolution as it is generally understood seems to be that the Muslim-majority provinces, viz., Punjab, Sind and the North West Frontier on the one side, and Bengal and Assam on the other, should be constituted as independent states. The Muslim League resolution, however, seems to be conscious of the fact that it would involve a great deal of injustice to the persons living in those parts of Punjab and Bengal where non-Muslims are in overwhelming majority. That is why the words "territorial readjustment" appear in the Lahore resolution. It is commonly understood that, by territorial readjustment, the Muslim League means that the Ambala Division of Punjab and the Burdwan Division of Western Bengal might be allowed to go out of the Pakistan states and to join the rest of India. This was likely to consolidate the Muslim position in these provinces still further—since it would raise the the Muslim-majority in the case of Punjab from 57.1 to 62.7 % and in the case of Bengal from 54.7 to 65 %. The resolution does not suggest what procedure shall be adopted for deciding these territorial readjustments. It is generally assumed that the option would lie with the provinces. Sir Stafford Cripps suggested that, since a bare majority of a provincial legislature was not sufficient to decide so great an issue, a provision may be made that if the majority in favour of adhering to a new all-India constitution were less than 60% the minority should be entitled to demand a plebiscite of the adult

male population, but this was not approved of by the Muslim opinion, Mr. Jinnah's idea being that, since it was a question of Muslim homelands, the decision should rest on the opinion of the Muslims only. This, of course, involves its own difficulties. If the Muslims are given the right to plebiscite why should the Hindus of the same provinces be denied that right? Dr. Ambedkar suggested that there might be two plebiscites, one among the Muslims and the other among the non-Muslims. But this idea also does not seem to be practicable.

### PROBLEM OF SIKHS

But this is not the only problem involved. Much more serious issues are at stake. The most serious problem is that of the Sikhs. A separation of Ambala Division from Punjab would mean the division of Sikhs of the Panjab into two provinces. Are the Sikhs willing to be so divided? It is true that the Sikhs are a bare minority. Even in Punjab they are hardly more than 15% of the total population. But they are a virile community and their wishes cannot be lightly ignored. The Sikhs have been a powerful factor in the politics of the Panjab. Since the annexation of their empire with British India, they have played a most noteworthy part in the making of the Panjab of today, and made contributions towards the defence of India, and towards its economic and political life, which are out of all proportion to their numerical strength. They claim to be the best agriculturists and colonists in India. They

have more than seven hundred 'gurudwaras' in the Panjab, with rich endowments and undying memories of their gurus, saints and martyrs attached to them. They have set up, and are financing, over four hundred educational institutions, colleges, schools, girls' seminaries and technical establishments. They own the best and the most fertile lands of the province, and contribute more than 40% of the provincial revenue. Their political importance had always been recognized. During the working of the Montford Reforms, one of the Executive Councillors always used to be a Sikh, and from 1926, when an additional Muslim member was added, till 1937, the Sikhs retained 25% representation in the Provincial Cabinet. Even when the Unionist Ministry had been formed, it was not considered as strongly entrenched as long as Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan had not entered into a pact with the Akali leader, Sardar Baldeo Singh.

The Sikhs to the last man are opposed to Pakistan. They refuse to agree to the Muslim claim that Punjab is a Muslim province. They challenge it on the ground that the non-Muslims own in Punjab more than eighty per cent of the urban property and pay more than eighty per cent of the Income-tax and Urban Property Tax, an overwhelmingly major proportion of the industrial enterprises, factories, mills, the insurance companies, film industry and business, shop-keeping, trade and commerce is in non-Muslim hands, and the cultural life of the province is primarily created and determined by

impulses coming from non-Muslim sources.<sup>1</sup> They were the first to raise the battle-cry against Pakistan. The Sikh All India Committee was the first to reject the Cripps proposals, on the ground that they had given the option of non-adherence to an All-India Union to majorities in the province. "We shall resist," they announced, "by all possible means separation of the Panjab from All-India Union." As the Sikh leaders pointed out in their memorandum to the Conciliation Committee, the Sikhs are irrevocably opposed to a partition of India on a communal basis. They consider the demand to be unnatural, reactionary and in opposition to the best interests of India as well as of the portions and regions sought to be partitioned off. They see in it the death-warrant of the future of the Sikh community as a whole, and are prepared to fight to a man against it.

The Sikh opposition to Pakistan cannot be lightly brushed aside. If Pakistan comes into existence inspite of the Sikh opposition, a homeland for the Sikhs, a Sikh Pakistan, would have to be created in the Panjab. The Sikhs have at least as strong a claim for such a homeland as the Muslims. They have their own list of grievances against the Muslim rule in the Panjab, which is in no case less imposing than the list of the Muslim grievances against the Congress rule. Their main complaint

1. Sikh Leaders' Memorandum for the Conciliation Committee.

against the Act of 1935 is that by giving them 33 seats in a House of 175 in the Panjab, 3 seats in a House of 50 in the N.W.F.P., and 6 seats in a House of 250 in the federal legislature, it had reduced them to complete ineffectiveness in all spheres of the political life of the country. The Muslims formed about 13% of the population in the U. P., as the Sikhs did in the Panjab. But the Muslims had been given 35% seats in the U. P., whereas the Sikhs had been given only 19% in the Panjab. But their greatest complaint is against the working of the Provincial Autonomy in their Province. Their proportion in the executive government had been reduced. All the key-posts that fell vacated or were vacated, became the monopoly of the Muslims—the Sikhs had been designedly excluded from effective participation in the administrative machinery. The Unionist Ministry had done everything in its power to thwart the work of Sikh educational institutions by reducing the government grants-in-aid in some, and by refusing to recognise others for the purpose of such grants-in-aid. Again, Panjabi was admittedly the spoken language and the mother-tongue of the Sikhs, Hindus and the Muslims in the province, and yet the administrative work of the Government was conducted in Urdu written in Persian script, and Urdu had been enforced as the medium of instruction even at the primary stage. The Unionist Ministry had done everything in its power to thwart the teaching of Panjabi even carried on solely or primarily by private enter-

prise. The Unionists had done everything in their power to degrade and demoralise the Sikhs by interfering in the practice of their religion arbitrarily and merely with a view to make them feel that they were a subject and subjugated people in their own homeland. By executive acts, they had stopped the preparation and use of *jhatka* in Government and semi-Government institutions. In fact, they alleged, the whole government machinery under the Muslim majority rule was biassed in favour of the Muslims and against the non-Muslims. A planned and sustained policy of discriminating against, and brow-beating, the Sikh officials in the Government services had become an undisguised feature of the autonomy regime in the Panjab. All this had resulted in the deterioration in the status and integrity of the public service, thus creating a state of affairs in which the elementary rights of neither the non-Muslim public nor the public services were safe.

### SIKH CLAIM TO NATIONHOOD

The Sikh claim to nationhood also is not less strong than the Muslim claim. Punjab is their homeland. "I place my claim," wrote Master Tara Singh, "upon the fact that the Panjab is not a Muslim province. I do not even admit that the Muslims are in majority in population." "The Panjab history," he further wrote, "is the Sikh history. It is the birth-place of the Sikh religion and the Sikh gurus. Most of, if not all, the Panjab martyrs are Sikh martyrs. The Sikhs are the only people who take pride in its



culture and language..... A Muslim poet will sing Mecca and Medina, a Hindu poet will sing Ganga and Benares, but it is the Sikh poet who sings Ravi and Chenab. The Sikhs alone are the true Panjabis." On a less responsible plane, the All-India Sikh Students Federation, Lahore, could express itself even more strongly: "If there is a separate nation in India, it is the Sikhs. They are unique in the world. Alone in the world, they have a common appellation suffixed to their names—at once both a sign of their homogeneity and exclusiveness. Alone in the world, they wear sword as a religious injunction and an article of faith. Alone in the world, they have a script which is exclusively their own. Alone in the world, they throw the challenge of solidarity even in matters of dress and appearance..... Internally, we are a compact, well-knit and disciplined people. We have our own ceremonials, we have our own seat of authority, Sri Akal Takhta Sahib..... By all tests, we are a separate nation, with our ideology of life....." Ideas sometimes grow with terrible rapidity. If the idea of Pakistan, originating in the minds of some irresponsible Cambridge youths could take its present dimensions, the idea of Khalistan also can become equally powerful. If Pakistan is established, Khalistan cannot be long behind.

But apart from the opposition of the Sikhs, let us try to find answer for the question whether Punjab can at all be partitioned. If the Sikhs do not agree to Pakistan—and one

can be sure that they would never agree—then, the only alternative would be to concede a homeland in the Panjab to the Sikhs also. That would mean a partition of the Panjab, but is a partition of the Panjab practicable? The idea of a partition of Punjab is not new. Sir Geoffrey Corbett had placed it before the Round Table Conference. It was discussed in October 1942 by a number of Hindu and Sikh leaders at Delhi. It may be suggested at first thought that if a dividing line is drawn from north to south right across the Lahore Division, it would place the Divisions with overwhelmingly Muslim majority, Rawalpindi and Multan, on the west and the Divisions with overwhelmingly non-Muslim population, viz., Ambala and Jullundhur, on the east, and that it would also be a fair distribution of the Muslim majority and the non-Muslim majority districts of the Lahore Division between the two parts, but it is much easier to draw a line on the map than actually to lay down the frontier outposts. To which of the two parts of the Panjab will Lahore belong? If we draw the dividing line east of Lahore, we shall be placing Lahore and Amritsar into different areas. Can a proper frontier line be drawn anywhere between Lahore and Amritsar? A look at the physical map of the Panjab will be enough to point out that there is no natural line of demarcation anywhere in this area. If an artificial line is drawn that will be so unnatural as to cut up even the canal system of the area into two parts. In fact, the Panjab

that it should not—what will be the worth of North-East India? Will it not be like a body without the soul? Without Calcutta, the North-East India would hardly be able to maintain itself. It will shrink into a minor fourth-rate power looking to the distant North-Western Pakistan for inspiration and protection.

### TRANSFER OF POPULATIONS

The question of the migration of populations without which the problem cannot be solved in reality has to be at once ruled out. The idea of such transfers of population was quite popular in South-Eastern Europe after the first Great War, but the difficulties which were involved in the transfer of the Greek and the Turk populations seems to have settled once for all that such a thing is absolutely impracticable. In the Indian circumstances the whole idea seems to be absurd. Can we think of the Muslim peasants leaving their land and home, which they have cultivated and occupied for hundreds of years and moving away, bag and baggage, to the newly created homelands? I have talked with Muslims scattered over the different parts of the country and they have unanimously shown their determination not to move out of the part of the country where they have been living. Can we think of the Muslim, say of Lucknow or Delhi or Haiderabad, preferring to go to Peshawar or Karachi or Deccan territories which would be so alien to him in climate,

culture and every thing ? He would certainly prefer to stay on in the country where he has been staying for generations, because if he moves away he would find himself in a land where people live in a different style, speak a different language and follow very different customs. He would be an utter stranger, even if the place to which he was asked to shift was represented to him as the very life and centre of a state to which he must offer allegiance. Even a child can say that the ardour for Pakistan in the Muslim community scattered far and wide throughout the country is not more than skin deep.

### THE FINANCIAL ASPECT

Then, there is the financial aspect of the question. A good deal used to be said about the financial implications of Pakistan, but the whole thing has now been very lucidly analysed by the Mody-Matthai memorandum, which was recently submitted to the Sapru Committee. These two gentlemen have made a very deep study of the financial implications of Pakistan and they have come to very definite conclusions regarding the various issues involved. They have, of course, cleared a number of misunderstandings also. They have judged the financial implications of Pakistan from three points of view. Firstly, from the point of view of its budgetary position i. e. as regards public revenue and expenditure ; secondly, from the point of view of the standard of living i.e. as regards economic conditions generally.

and, thirdly, from the point of view of defence requirements i. e. as regards external security. They have also examined these problems both from the point of view of the creation of Pakistan on the basis of provinces, as implied in the Muslim League resolution, and on the basis of districts as suggested in the Rajaji-Gandhi formulae. They point out that the budgetary position of Pakistan will not be unsound in either case. Even if the subventions granted to the deficit provinces under the 1935 Act are withdrawn there will be certain extra sources of income which will enable them to meet their budgetary demands satisfactorily.

• Secondly, so far as the standard of living is concerned, they have pointed out that it would not be very much different. The standard of living depends on food production, industrial employment, trade etc. From the point of view of these, the position of Pakistan appears to be even better than that of Hindustan. More land can be brought under cultivation. Even in the existing land the food supplies of the western zone of Pakistan are better off than the rest of India—Sindh and Punjab are even now surplus provinces. In the matter of industries, though the Pakistan areas seem to be deficient in coal, manganese and other minerals, they can certainly import them from outside and develop their industries to any extent. There are greater possibilities in the Pakistan areas for the development of hydro-electric power than anywhere else.

## DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

The chief financial difficulty that will arise in case of Pakistan will be that of meeting the defence expenditure. The defence budget of the country is bound to shoot up in the post-war years : competent authorities think that it will be at least the double of the pre-war level. A number of new factors will make that inevitable. The naval and the air arms will have to be considerably enlarged, and the army itself will need a reorganization on efficient lines. The colossus rise of Russia in the north-west and of China in the north-east are also likely to make it necessary for the Indian forces to be kept in greater trim. Moreover, in view of the uncertainty of relations between Pakistan and Hindustan, and in view of the delicacy of the frontier-line between them, each one of them will be compelled to maintain much larger forces. In this, the Pakistan states will have to bear a much greater responsibility, since, over and above defending themselves against the sullen Hindustan, seething with irredentist desires, they will have to bear the brunt of both north-western and the north-eastern defences of India, both immensely vulnerable to foreign attacks. Even if we start on the basis that Pakistan will come into existence with the good will of the Hindus, and that the latter are prepared fully to share the responsibility of defending the frontiers open to foreign aggression, we find that the Pakistan States will hardly be able to bear even that limited financial responsibility. In this, of course, we cannot

be very sure of our data. We can base our conclusion only on certain assumptions, but presuming that those assumptions are not very incorrect, we have to face a very gloomy picture.

Assuming that the post-war defence budget of the country will be 100 crores—in the pre-war years it used to be near about 50—the share of the two arms of Pakistan, on *pro rata* calculation will be 36 crores, on a province-wise basis, and 23 crores on a district-wise basis—whereas the maximum surplus available, according to Mody-Matthai calculations—which, it may be said, are most liberal—will be 14 crores<sup>1</sup> in one case and 9 crores in the other. Even if a little more money is saved by economising on direct demands or savings on civil administration or cutting down of civil work, and abolition of subventions—all which would very seriously affect the morale of administration—and another little is collected by increasing taxes, revenue-duties, freight charges etc.—which is likely to make the government highly unpopular and seriously affect the trade of the country—it will hardly improve the situation.<sup>2</sup> The only alternative thus seems to be to cut down the defence expenditure, and imperil the security of the country. As Dr. Beni Prasad puts it, "It betrays a tragic misreading of contemporary affairs to posit a choice between union and in-

1. According to Prof. Coupland's calculation, it will be less than 3 crores.

2. Coupland thinks that the addition by these means cannot be more than five crores, which he considers to be the outside figure.

dependence. The inexorable logic of the age presents the country with radically different alterations: union plus independence or dis-union plus dependence."<sup>1</sup>

### PROSPECTS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The problem of defence in modern times has become integrated with that of industrial development. A country can be defended these days only if it possesses considerable economic resources and is able to develop them to the fullest extent. It was the economic stability of the U. S. A. and the U. S. S. R. which brought them into the front-rank of world-politics, and the mistaken fascist economy which was responsible for the collapse of the Axis Powers. If India has to play an important part in world-affairs, she must develop her economic strength. This can be done only on the basis of Indian unity. In a divided India no economic development is possible. In the sphere of economic development, just as in that of defence, the world is fast moving towards joint organization over large contiguous areas, towards the idea of an optimum economic unit. From all points of view, India provides an excellent example of being one such unit. There is hardly any other country of the world, with the exception of the U. S. A. and Soviet Russia, which is so favourably placed from this point of view as India. She has geographical unity, on the basis of which a comprehensive superstructure of administrative unity has been organized, round

1. *Communal Settlement*, p. 22.



which there have grown a uniform system currency and contract and a network of joint stock banks, with the Reserve Bank of India at its apex. Excellent and deep foundations have thus been inadvertently laid for the future economic development of India.

In the words of the Mody-Matthai memorandum, "India satisfies the requirements of optimum unit for economic development in terms of area, population and resources more than any other single country in the world except the United States of America and Soviet Russia. In spite of her population of 300 millions, the density of population in India taken as a whole is smaller than in most countries of the world. She has enough space of her own and the variety of climates and soils makes it possible for her to produce most agricultural commodities in general use. The mineral reserves of the country, though in certain respects deficient, are on the whole adequate to make her a powerful and reasonably self-sufficient industrial nation. Her population again constitutes a sufficiently large potential market."

All these advantages would be lost, if India is divided into two artificial and unnatural divisions. Differences of climate and soil and the distribution of mineral sources, which can be so many sources of strength in case of a large free trade territorial unit will actually be so many handicaps in the economic development of the smaller units. What is particularly re-

markable is that, in this, the Pakistan State is likely to be a greater loser. Unconnected by any land route, its two parts will be separated from each other by more than 700 miles of alien territory, and will hardly be in a position to develop co-ordinated policy of economic development. Then, deficiency in respect of important mineral resources, like coal, iron, ferroalloys etc., is likely to be a serious obstacle in the way of her growth as an industrial nation. If Pakistan cannot develop her economic resources and industrial output—which she can only do in close collaboration with the rest of India—she is a doomed nation, ready to be trampled under the feet of any determined aggressor, a helpless pawn in the game of power-politics, a mere play-thing, an object of contempt rather than respect, a weak addition to the museum of higgledy-piggledy nations that we find strutting all over the world.

Too much of cheap sentiment has grown round the idea of Pakistan in the Muslim world. It can hardly stand the light of reason. A vast mass of unclothed and under-nourished semi-literate neurotics have begun to see in it all sorts of fantastic visions. Many who float on a slightly higher surface think that Pakistan will be a preserve of true Islamic culture. They have been fed on the puerile propaganda that majority-rule would mean a set-back to this culture. They fail to understand that no blow can be more fatal to what they cherish as their ideal, the Islamic culture, than a segregation of the so-called Muslim provinces from the rest

of India. The best of Islamic culture was evolved in this country—in collaboration with the people of this land. It was here that the true Islamic culture, flaburgasted and fumbling under the blow of its own conquest from Cordova to China, constantly open to the corrosive influences of the super-civilized Persians and the semi-barbaric Mongols, found a refuge and a haven—and developed its best, in art and architecture, in life and literature, in religion and metaphysics. Saracenic art from Egypt to Spain can hardly produce a greater monument of beauty than Taj Mahal. Islam has hardly produced a better school of painters than the one which worked under the Great Mughals in Agra and Delhi. Persian literature produced in India has a greater charm and suavity about it than that produced in Persia itself. Both the ascetic and the Sufi aspects of Islam developed to their best in this country. Which other country in the world can boast of producing better Islamic culture than this land which belongs entirely to Muslims as much as to the Hindus, but out of which they now want to carve out a portion, and possibly want to make it the burial of the best that Islam has produced anywhere in the world? Without a living contact with the rest of India, without its sympathy and affection, its understanding and support, Islamic culture is bound to shrivel up, and sink into oblivion.

### OTHER DETERMINING FACTORS

Apart from these considerations, regarding

delimitation of boundaries and finances, there are a number of other political factors which also are bound to play a decisive part in finally determining the issue of Pakistan. Let us try to understand in what direction they are likely to work. The most important factor in determining the situation will, of course, be the British Government. That, as we have already seen, will fully exploit the Congress-League differences, but will never bless a partition of the country on the lines of the Muslim League demand: it would rather atomise the country. The British Government will not, of its own accord, quit India. Nor would it oblige the Muslim League by dividing India and quitting. It would rather divide India, and stay. That would mean a Balkanisation of the country, together with the maintenance of a weak agency centre, somewhat on the lines suggested by Prof. Reginald Coupland. A detailed study of that will be taken up later. But this much is clear that the British Government would not be a party to a division of the country into two fully sovereign states, simply because that would not be in their self-interest.

### ORTHODOX HINDU OPPOSITION

Orthodox Hindu opposition to Pakistan is frankly irrational, and amounts to indirectly supporting it. This may appear paradoxical at first sight, but a little thinking will make it clear. The orthodox Hindu believes that the country belongs to him, and that the Muslim is an alien. The Arya Samaj actually had the ambition to

re-convert the Muslims—but the wind of *shuddhi* and *sangathan* merely brought the whirlwind of *tableegh* and *tanzeem*. Even within the ranks of the Congress, there is a section which believes in imposing the Sanskritized Hindi on the Muslims, whether they like it or not, and insists on 'Bande Matram' and the salutation of national flag. Here is a sample from Savarkar's armoury: "When we will be in a position to retaliate and do retaliate, the Muslims will come to their senses in a day—knowing that every attempt to tyrannize the Hindus is sure to recoil on themselves and react for the worse on Muslim interests in all India, the Muslims will learn to behave as good boys". It is this attitude which is responsible for the demand of Pakistan. If the Hindus are to be organised into a fighting community—not against the British but against the Muslims—that seems to be the aim and the ideal of the Hindu Mahasabha—what will restrain the Muslims from organising themselves in a similar para-military fashion? This will only lead to civil war, and, in spite of the numerical superiority of the Hindus, one cannot always be certain of the outcome of that civil war, at least in all parts of the country. Muslims may be able to retain their power in the parts of the country where they are in a majority, and thus establish what they are clamouring for, a sovereign-state of their own. Hindus will hardly be able to check its materializing.

But the problem is, will a civil war be permitted as long as the British are here? They

might goad us into a few riots, but they can never countenance a civil war. It may indeed be argued, as Dr. Beni Prasad points out, that a civil war "can resolve a deadlock and open the way to fresh adjustments either in favour of union as in Switzerland and the United States of America, or in favour of separation as in Latin America, on more than one occasion.... A moment's reflection, however, will show that a civil war lies beyond the range of possibilities so long as British control persists. A civil war is waged by regular armies operating at the behest of organised governments. It is banned by the presence of British power in India. Indeed, the dark hints of armed conflict can serve only to strengthen the British hold in the interests of elementary security of life and property". Some people hold the belief that a civil war is inevitable in India after the British are gone. They forget that the British will not leave India to anarchy or to God, as Gandhiji had urged them to do in 1942, but if they go, they will only go when the national movement in India gains sufficient power, and is able to make that power effective. In other words, the British Government will be immediately replaced by a National Government, and there does not seem to be any reason to believe that the National Government will, in any way, be less capable of maintaining law and order in the country than the existing irresponsible Government of today. Finally, one may ask with all humility, if the path of conciliation is not better than the path of conflict.

## OTHER MUSLIM ORGANIZATIONS

The attitude of the other Muslim organizations is also likely to be a powerful determining factor in the situation. The Muslim League is not the only Muslim organisation. It is very difficult to say—in view of the secrecy that is maintained in regard to its enrolment list—how far it is representative of the Muslims. In 1937, it was a minor political organisation. In all the various provincial councils, there were only 108 representatives of the League, whereas the other Muslim groups had 377. Since then, the League has undoubtedly grown in stature, but it has become more and more a handmaid in the hands of reactionary elements. It may now have become the most important political organization of the Muslims, but is certainly not the only one, and is hardly representative of more than a fraction. The teeming Muslim millions are still unstirred by political consciousness. Political life in the Muslim society is largely confined to the urban classes, and there the Muslim League is fairly strong. But there are other Muslim organisations too. There are the Khaksars. There is the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind. There is the Ahmadiya movement. There is the Shia Political Conference. There are the Momins, claiming half the Muslim population of India; certainly the mute, inexpressive, ineffective half. These organisations have uniformly stood against a partition of the country. The large number

of Congress Muslims and the still larger number of those who call themselves Nationalist Muslims, and make attempts from time to time to organize themselves, are irrevocably wedded to the Congress ideal of the unity of the country. In 1940, nine Muslim organizations amalgamated themselves in the All-India Azad Muslim Board. In a meeting held at Delhi, in March 1942, the Board characterised the British acceptance of the Muslim League as the authoritative spokesman of the Indian Muslims as 'an independable subterfuge' to mask its disinclination to part with power. The Committee of the All India Momin Conference passed a resolution to the effect that "the solidarity, integrity and unity of India is vitally essential for the common good of the Indian people and especially in the best interest of the Muslims of India."

But, though critical of the League, these Muslim organisations are not likely to compromise the real interests of the Indian Muslims. The only difference between the League and these organisations is that while the League claims to be interested more in "the welfare of the Muslim society than in that of the Indian nation, these organisations are primarily national, and only secondarily communal. Even the Khudai Khidmatgars, as explained by the then-President of the Frontier Provincial Congress Committee, were "in full agreement" with the stand taken by Rajaji to concede the right of self-determination to the Muslims. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema, in a conference in 1942, while



demanding complete independence for India, also asked for constitutional safeguards "such as would secure religious, political and cultural self-determination for Muslims". The Azad Muslim Conference also envisages 'within Indian freedom' self-determination for minorities.

### THE MUSLIM CASE

The Muslims are, thus, unanimous in their demand for the right of self-determination. Progressive Hindu thought is fast adjusting itself to this demand. As long as it cannot be disputed that the Muslim society has a certain compactness about it, and a certain distinctiveness from the rest, they have to be treated as an important political group. The same grounds apply to the Sikh case in Punjab. A people, more than ninety million in number, twice the population of Britain and nine times that of Canada, cannot be treated as a mere minority, and kept suppressed. Their right to nation-hood may or may not be recognised—there is nothing in it which should have aroused such keen controversy. Nationalism is a fluid term, and has been, so many times in history adopted or discarded. If the Muslims insist on calling themselves a nation, nobody can dispute their claim. But nation or no nation, they have to be conceded the right of self-determination, and this has to be inter-woven into the constitutional texture of the country. You cannot simply impose a majority rule upon a minority conscious of its distinctive culture and haunted by the fear that this culture is likely to be

swept away if majority rule came in force. The Joint Select Committee was not wrong in expressing the opinion that "majority rule is not a principle of government, unless the minority for the time being are willing to acquiesce in the decision of the majority". "It cannot", Lionel Fielden thinks, "be denied that a group of ninety million people, wherever and whoever they may be, will be unwilling to acquiesce in the decision of a majority which is perpetual and has a different culture and religion". I do not say that a majority, different in religion and culture, will always throttle the minority. Any impartial judge would acquit the Congress of the fantastic atrocity charges brought against it by the Muslim League and testify to the sincerity of the Congress in reassuring the safeguarding of the minority rights. But something has got to be done to assuage the minority suspicions. If Pakistan is to be ruled out, it does not mean that the Muslim right of self-determination also is to be denied. There is overwhelming reason in conceding to the Muslims the right to self-determination and formation of the government they want in areas which are predominantly Muslim. The only alternative would be a continuation of Indian disunity. I do not again mean to say that the concession would solve the communal problem, or bring us 'Swaraj'. The mighty British Government have innumerable weapons in their armoury to keep us at logger-heads with each other. But the conceding of such a

right to the Muslims will certainly ease the communal situation—and I strongly think that it will be an act of sheer justice and fair play.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Pakistan: Theoretical Considerations

What, after all, is the basis for the Muslim League demand of Pakistan? It is the claim that the Muslims of India are a separate nation. The idea has a long history, but began to be seriously propounded only after the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League had been passed. It came into existence as a justification of the Muslim demand rather than as a cause of it. By frequent repetition, it gathered momentum. It was most lucidly expressed by Mr. Jinnah during his September negotiations with Gandhiji. "We maintain and hold," he wrote, "that Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation. We are a nation of a hundred million, and what is more, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions". "In short," he concluded, "we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law, we are a nation".

## TWO-NATIONS THEORY EXAMINED

This is the famous two-nations theory as expounded by its arch-supporter. According to Mr. Jinnah, the Hindus and the Muslims are two separate nations, the difference between them being "deep-rooted and ineradicable". Mr. Jinnah is not prepared to concede that claim to the Sikhs, though he would not mind the South Indians claiming a separate state for themselves in Dravidistan. During his Punjab tour of 1942, he ridiculed the idea of the principle of self-determination being applied to the Sikhs. The Muslims, he said, claimed the right because they were "a national group on a given territory, which was their homeland, and in the zones where they were in a majority". "Have you known anywhere in history", he asked, "that sub-national groups scattered all over be given a state?.... The Muslims are not sub-national. It is their birth-right to claim and exercise the right of self-determination."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jinnah's attitude towards the Sikh claim is clearly incompatible with his support for Dravidistan.

Mr. Jinnah's claim of the Muslims being a separate nation, in its own turn, has been repudiated by almost all Muslim political organizations and leaders outside the League. The Azad Muslim Board, the All India Muslim Conference and other Muslim organizations, all repudiated the idea of the Muslims being a separate nation. Maulana Azad declared that

1. *Indian Year Book*, 1944-45, pp. 902-903.

Pakistan was against the spirit of Islam. But Gandhiji possibly has been the greatest critic of the League creed. He thinks that the only thing which divides the Muslim from the Hindu is his religion. "I find no parallel in history", he wrote in reply to Mr. Jinnah's advocacy of the two-nations theory, "of a body of converts and their descendants claiming to be a nation apart from the parent stock.....You do not claim to be a separate nation by right of conquest, but by reason of acceptance of Islam. Will the two nations become one if the whole of India accepted Islam? Will Bengalis, Oriyas, Andhras, Tamilians, Maharashtrians, Gujratis etc. cease to have their special characteristics if all of them become converts to Islam?" Gandhiji's argument remains unrefuted.

### WHAT CONSTITUTES A NATION ?

Where does the truth lie? Does India consist of two nations? What, after all, constitutes nationhood? A number of criteria, all incomplete by themselves, are suggested. If they are applied to the Muslim case, they seem to work havoc. *Race* is supposed to be one such factor. By no stretch of imagination can we say that the Muslims belong to a race which is different from the one to which Hindus belong. A Punjabi Hindu is more akin to a Punjabi Muslim than to a Bengali Hindu: he has the same large built, fair complexion, round head. Racially there might be some admixture of the Mongoloid or the Tribetan blood in the Bengali or the Assamese and plenty

of Dravidian influence in the Madrasi or the Maratha, but there is hardly any difference between the Hindus and Muslims belonging to the same territory. *Language* is supposed to be another. The Muslims of India, however, do not possess a separate language. In Punjab, they speak Punjabi, in Sind Sindhi, in western U. P., Persianised Hindustani, in eastern U. P., its Sanskritised version, in Bengal, still more highly Sanskritised Bengali, and so on. They cannot claim Urdu as their exclusive language. Hindus have contributed to build it up, and even now large masses of Hindus, both in eastern Punjab and western U.P. use it as their mother-tongue. So far as *community of interests* is concerned, there is a greater clash of interest between a Muslim zamindar and a Muslim peasant than between a Muslim zamindar and a Hindu zamindar or a Muslim peasant and a Hindu peasant. *Geography* is pointed out as another factor. But so far as this is concerned, in India, there are hardly any rivers or mountain-ranges that divide Hindu territories from the Muslim : the two people lie everywhere embedded together, on the common soil, under the common sun. In fact, the only thing that distinguishes the Muslim from the Hindu is that he follows a different religion.

I know that nationalism is not wholly determined by the factors of race, language, community of interests, geography or religion. There are much deeper factors too. "A nation", writes Renan, "is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which are really only one, go to

make up this soul or spiritual principle. One of these things lies in the past, the other in the present. The one is the possession in common of a rich heritage of memories; and the other is actual agreement, the desire to live together, and the will to continue to make the most of the joint inheritance. To share the glories of the past, and a common will in the present; to have done great deeds together, and the desire to do more—these are the essential conditions of a people's being"<sup>1</sup>. Judged by these tests of sentiment too, we find that the Hindus and the Muslims have continued to build up one nation in this country, the Indian nation. They have inherited from their common past of a thousand years a rich heritage of memories, enshrouded in metaphysical synthesis and beautiful works of art and literature. They have shed their blood, in common fight, on the same soil. They, in common, brought into existence the great Mughal Empire. They, in common, broke it up into pieces when it failed to satisfy them. The culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, sense of value and proportion, history and traditions, even the legal laws and moral codes, have been built up in this country by the joint endeavours of Hindus and Muslims. Any attempt to cut them up into Hindu and Muslim is bound to fail. Muslims have not created in this country any distinctive culture or civilization, language or literature, art or architecture of their own. Their forefathers brought with them certain 'ideas' from outside,

1. C. Renan: *What is a Nation?*



the pollen-dust of a new culture, but it merely went to impregnate the virile culture of the land and brought into existence something which was different both from the source and the surroundings and yet which was a synthesis of the two.

I am not unaware of the fact that the 'actual agreement' between the two sections of the Indian Society, the Hindu and the Muslim, is gradually slackening, 'the desire to live together' is no longer so intense and deep, and 'the will to continue to make the most of the joint inheritance' is all but gone. In the wake of political differences, a spirit of cultural segregation is raising its head. Sir Syed Ahmad started with a separate dress for the Indian Muslims. During the last half a century, almost a new language, packed with Persian and Arabic is developing at Aligarh, Lahore and Hyderabad. Even in Bengal there is a tendency on the part of the Indian Muslims to call water as 'pani' rather than 'jola' (though the one is as much a Sanskrit derivative as the other). The demand for Pakistan is gaining ground. Muslims seem to think more of the earlier Caliphs than of Adil Shah or Akbar. But this tendency, as we have seen earlier, is merely due to a particular trend, revivalism, and has been fostered by external circumstances and an alien administration. It is being exploded now. Under the surface of revivalism, strong modernist forces are tempestuously surging up. The hard crust is bound to break sooner or later. The British too cannot long play with their policy of keep-

ing the country divided. The circumstances are quickly changing. Our politics is slowly losing its communal complexion. The Indian nation is already in the throes of evolution. I do not, however, want to use these visions of a glorious future to kill the Muslim demand of the present. I agree with Renan that "the existence of a nation is a daily plebiscite, just as that of the individual is a continual affirmation of life". If the Muslims insist upon their being a separate nation from the rest of the people of the country, however mistaken their stand might be, I, for one, am not going to dispute it.

### NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

But here, we are faced with another, and a tougher, problem. Even if we concede that the Muslims are a nation—for, as I have said, nationalism is a question, after all, of mere sentiment—does it entitle them to possess a separate state of their own? The principle of national self-determination can be traced back to the French Revolution. Mill strongly advocated it. "Where the sentiment of nationality," he wrote in 1861, "exists in any force, there is a *prima facie* case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart."<sup>1</sup> But the principle reached its apogee in the peace-settlement of 1919. Wilson was its arch-prophet. "Self-determination," he wrote, "is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action, which statesmen will henceforth ignore at

1. Mill : *Representative Government*.

their peril." Statesmen of 1919, at least, did not ignore it. But they had to face a greater peril. The acceptance of the principle merely led to the Balkanization of Europe. Every separate minority, the Lithuanian, the Latvian, the Estonian, the Czech, the Pole, the Austrian, the Hungarian, the Yugoslav, the Rumanian, the Bulgarian, the Greek, and so on, was constituted into a separate state. But did it solve the minority, or any other, problem of Europe? The history of Europe between the two great wars is a history of a continual break-down of the principle which the philosopher-politician of America had so dexterously advocated.

People have now begun to see that one of the important reasons why the peace settlement of 1919 broke down was the confusion made by its authors between the terms 'nation' and 'state' and their proud faith in the principle that each nation, simply because it was a different group, had a right to constitute itself into a state. This was their heritage of the nineteenth century, when nationalism and democracy had entered into a holy wedlock. It had not yet been realised that nationalism might gradually eat into the vitals of democracy—as happened in Central Europe—or that democracy might explode the shell of nationalism into pieces—as happened in Russia. In fact, we have now the wisdom to see that nationalism and true democracy are incompatible. If we give the first place to nationalism, the sentiment is likely to become an instrument in the hands of the capitalist class for the

exploitation of the proletariat. There will be fascism or plutocracy. If, on the other hand, we give due regard to each man having not only an equal voting power with another but also equal opportunity of finding bread for himself, the political frontiers have got to be redrawn, and the factor of nationality relegated into the back-ground. We cannot long defer making a choice. It was the failure of the western democracies to make choice in time which brought the recent catastrophe.

During the last twenty-five years, the principle of national self-determination has been on the anvil. The very words 'national' and 'self-determination,' put together, bring into existence a dilemma. Nationality and self-determination—the one is an objective fact, the other a subjective right. If every national group has automatically to form itself into a state, where does the principle of self-determination come in? If all men speaking the Polish language are to become citizens of Poland, all men speaking Lithuanian the citizens of Lithuania, and all men following Islam in India, the citizens of Pakistan—simply because they speak a particular language or follow a particular religion—this is anything but self-determination. Religion, of course, is a very ante-diluvian basis for the determination of nationality, but even if we take up language, which was made the basis of the 1919 settlement, only a bold man can dogmatically assert that all people speaking a particular language would like to become members of a particular political

unit. In fact, the plebiscites conducted in the post-war years in certain European countries are a clear eye-opener. In Allenstein, out of 46 p.c. speaking the Polish language, only 2 p. c. cast their votes for joining Poland. In Marienwerder, Upper Silesia and Klagenfurt also, there was a wide hiatus between language affinities and political aspirations.

Self-determination, in fact, is not a right of certain recognised and pre-determined nations, but a right of individual men and women which includes the right, within certain limitations, to form national groups. In talking of the rights and claims of Indian Muslims as a nation, we cannot ignore the rights and claims, wishes or interests of Indian Muslims as individuals. It would really be odd if the Indian Muslims, simply on grounds of religious and cultural distinctiveness, were to be rooted out of the wider context of military and economic interdependence, which the geographical unity of India demands, and were to be constituted into a separate state. We have not merely to take note of the cry of a few self-appointed leaders, but also to take into consideration the wishes and interests of the Muslim masses. Do they desire a separation ? No amount of League resolutions will be enough to convince us of that. It can be decided only by a plebiscite.

But even if under the hysteric atmosphere created by the well-organized machinery of modern propaganda, the Muslims of India are

made to express a wish for separation, would it be wise to concede it, if it was clearly known that it would not be in their interest? "Self-determination," in the words of Prof. Carr, "is one important principle which should be taken into account in deciding the form and extent of the political unit. But it *cannot be safely treated as the sole or over-riding principle to which all other considerations must be subordinated*. There can be no absolute right of self-determination any more than there can be an absolute right to do as one pleases in a democracy. A group of individuals living in the middle of Great Britain or Germany cannot claim, in virtue of the principle of self-determination, an inherent right to establish an independent, self-governing unit. In the same way, it would be difficult to claim for Wales, Catalonia and Uzbekistan an absolute and inherent right to independence, even if a majority of their inhabitants should desire it; *such a claim to exercise self-determination would have to be weighed in the light of the interests, reasonably interpreted, of Great Britain, Spain and Soviet Russia.*"<sup>1</sup> In the Indian context, we have to examine if the constituting of the Muslim majority provinces into a separate state would be in the interests of the Muslims and the non-Muslims living in those regions, in particular, and in the interests of India, in general.

1. E. H. Carr : *Conditions of Peace*, 1942, pp. 47-48.

## THE MILITARY FACTOR

The principle of self-determination received a mild shock during the first world-war, a serious set-back during the inter-war years and a rude shaking in the recent world war. This has been due to a rapid change in the conditions of fighting. Before 1914, even a small nation could hope to maintain its neutrality in a warring world. But this hope received a shock when Belgium and Greece were, against their will, drawn into the vortex of war because it suited certain Great Powers. Others too had to move out of the orbit of their neutrality due to external pressure or the need of self-aggrandisement. The Peace Settlement added to this congeries of small states. But they were supposed to get over this difficulty by a new system of collective security, which was being evolved under the auspices of the League of Nations, as a panacea of all troubles. That system, too, broke down, due to a number of internal contradictions. The League proved ineffective. Attempts to build up hegemony under a Great Power, like France, were foiled by the restiveness and opposition of the small powers. In the meantime, the Big Powers, due to bigger means at their command, were building up gigantic war machines. The small powers were becoming smaller and powerless. The movement of the *wehrmacht* in 1940 proved to be the death-blow of any hope on the part of the small powers to maintain their neutrality. Norway, Holland, Belgium, were

quickly crushed into dust by the Nazi steam-roller. The hollowness of national self-determination was never more clearly expressed than in the summer of 1940. A small power can no longer hope to defend itself against a Great Power, unless it tries to do so by surrendering its military independence to another Great Power. Inter-dependence has become the only condition of survival.

We have to face these facts squarely. Can an India partitioned into Pakistan and Hindustan stand in the face of a threat of foreign aggression on the part of Russia, or China, or Japan, or any other first class power? We have already seen the financial implications of partition in their bearing on defence expenditure. The Pakistan and North-East India cannot hope to possess sufficient funds for defence for a long time to come. Their relations with Hindustan may or may not be cordial. Supposing that one of the Pakistan regions is so threatened, the only course open to it would be to approach Hindustan for collaboration in defence, but it is quite likely that the latter would impose conditions which would, all but in name, envelope the sovereignty of Pakistan. Would Pakistan not be obliged in that case to be merely a dependency of Hindustan? Even if there is cordiality between the two units, needs of defence would require a much closer collaboration between them. In their worst crisis, France was offered by England a proposal for forming an union with her. France rejected it, and was ruined. In the case of Pakistan also,



perhaps, at the first flush of foreign aggression, only such a union might save her, and if she rejects it due to a long tradition of distrust and bitterness, she may have the same destiny in store for her which France had to face in the gloomy summer of 1940.

We cannot hope that the end of the present war has drawn with it the curtain over all wars. In fact, the simmering has already begun under the surface. The end of the present war was hardly in sight, when the talk for future war breaking out was gathering conviction. The equilibrium is too uncertain. The atmosphere is sur-charged with distrust. The problems of the world have not been solved : attempts are being made to shelve them. Fascism, crushed in Central Europe, walks stealthily in England and America : Democracy continues to be threatened to its very foundations. Great Powers seem to think that the world belongs exclusively to them. Small Powers can only look with horror at the future. India, with her 400 millions, continues to be a slave country. It is hardly the time to make experiments. With the shifting of the centre of political and military gravity from the Atlantic to the Pacific, India's burden of defence has become still more heavy. With world wars in prospect at her gates, India has to marshal all her arms and resources, so that she might be able to play a decisive role in world-affairs. What is expected of India is a 'swift, decisive and effective reaction' to 'any new move in the world-wide chess-board of diplomacy and war.' This can be

possible only when the resources of the entire country are capable of mobilization and use under unified direction. Divided control in the sphere is, in Dr. Beni Prasad's words, "a luxury too expensive to contemplate."

### THE ECONOMIC FACTOR

If the military considerations are important, the economic considerations are vital. We can ignore them only at our peril. One of the causes of the world being out of joints to-day has been the growing incongruity between, what Hayes calls, "a popular determination to have smaller cultural units and a will to have larger economic aggregations." Political disintegration has gone hand in hand with economic concentration. The political world has failed to keep pace with economic trends. The Peace Settlement of 1919 conceded, to the small nations of Europe, the right of political self-determination, but not the right to work or the right not to starve. "To what a different future," wrote Mr. Keynes, with anguish, "Europe might have looked forward if either Mr. Lloyd George or Mr. Wilson had apprehended that the most serious of the problems which claimed their attention were not political or territorial, but financial and economic, and that the perils of the future lay not in frontiers and in sovereignties but in food, coal and transport."<sup>1</sup> "The prudent course," as Prof. Carr points out, "would have been.....to attend first, as an immediate practical measure, to the urgent

1. J. M. Keynes : *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, p. 134.

needs of economic recovery, and then to evolve, in the light of the experience gained, the necessary compromise between the claims of national independence and the imperative exigencies of economic inter-dependence." But this was not done. "It soon became clear, that the satisfaction given in the name of self-determination to national aspirations had aggravated economic problems . . . . The wielding of unlimited economic power by a multiplicity of small national units had become incompatible with the survival of civilization." In this connection, we cannot emphasise too much the warning uttered by Prof. Carr. "Political rights," he says, "have failed to provide a key to the millennium. Just as the right to vote seems to be of little value if it does not carry with it the right to work for a living wage, so the right of national self-determination loses much of the appeal, if it turns out to be a limiting factor on economic opportunity. The rights of nations, like the rights of man, will become hollow, if they fail to pave the way to economic well-being, or even to bare subsistence, and offer no solution of the problems which must confront the man in the street and the man in the field."<sup>1</sup>

By no logic of rational argument, nor by any stretch of wishful imagination, can we say that Pakistan would help in the economic development of India as a whole or any of its parts. As a matter of fact, by all calculations it is likely to be a suicidal step. The geographical

1. E. H. Carr : *Conditions of Peace*, pp. 57-60.

unity of India is too potent a factor, both in the matter of military needs as well as of economic requirements, to be lightly ignored. Geography, by segregating the country from the rest of the world, by means of high mountain-ranges and deep seas, and by not interposing any impassable barriers in between, has forged India into a single strategic and economic unit. On the basis of this geographical unity, there has been built up, largely due to reasons of administrative convenience, a much wider unity. The whole country has been linked up by roads and railways, posts and telegraphs. A wide framework of economic unity has, thus, been built up. Already, there are plans for a thorough mobilization of India's vast material resources. These plans can materialize only if the Indian unity remains unbroken.

### GEOGRAPHICAL UNITY OF INDIA

Geographical unity of India, in fact, goes much deeper. It has become quite fashionable to compare India with Europe. If Europe, which, without Russia, is smaller than India, can be divided into a number of nation-states, it is asked, why should there be so much of anxious thinking on the matter of dividing India into two? India is sometimes compared with the Balkan Peninsula with its maze of nationalities.<sup>1</sup> In fact, no

1. Mr. Jinnah said, at Lahore, 1940, "History has shown us many geographical tracts, much smaller than the sub-continent of India which otherwise might have been called one country, but which have been divided

analogy, can be more misleading than that of comparing India with Europe. Geography, by means of a long indented coastline, peninsulas, and inland seas and islands, cuts up Europe into a number of territories. Geography, as pointed out above, is the one most predominating unifying factor in India. It may also be noted that the European inland frontiers coincide to a very large extent with diversities of races, language and cultural traditions. In India, the only thing that divided the Muslims from the Hindus is their pursuit of a different religion: physical barriers dividing the people following one religion from those following another simply do not exist anywhere in India. Even if Pakistan materializes, it will leave out more than 23 million Muslims, and will include a very large percentage of Hindus, Sikhs and others.

The presence of these geographical traits have conditioned the entire history of India and Europe. In India, the centralizing tendency has always had the upper hand: in Europe, forces of disintegration have been more strong. Empires have grown in this country almost without any effort. Round Magadh, made glorious by Budhistic traditions and made strong by an efficient army, the Mauryan Empire grew, circle beyond circle, till it covered the whole country. Certain internal reactions and certain foreign

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into as many states as there are nations inhabiting them. The Balkan Peninsula comprises as many as seven or eight sovereign states."

—Mr. Jinnah's Presidential speech, Lahore, 1940!

aggressions brought about its downfall, but phoenix-like, out of its ashes, there grew the Gupta Empire, which marked the golden age of Indian history. Even when it crumbled, Harsha ruled over more than half of it. Could people like Qutbuddin and Iltutmish and Alauddin Khilji—who were certainly much taller in stature than the Anglo-Indian historians and their Indian counter-parts think them to be, but who were pygmies if we compare them with the tasks they actually performed—establish an empire bigger than Napoleon or Hitler could dream of, if they were not assisted by the geographical unity of India? Babar certainly had never thought that he would be handing over to his successors a territory several hundred times bigger than his homeland of Farghana. Once, Akbar looked south, Khandesh and Ahmadnagar came toppling down at his feet; once, Bajirao looked north, the Maratha sabres rattled at the gates of Attack and Cuttock. Men like Clive, and Warren Hastings, who might have risen to the position of senior clerks, if they had lived in England, could become the founders of the British Empire in India, thanks, again, to the factor of geographical unity.

Europe, on the other hand, has been a battleground of chaos and confusion, rapine and bloodshed. Ever since the Holy Roman Empire crumbled, bringing down with it the edifice of the Holy Roman Church too, all efforts to evolve an European unity have failed. Europe has been the land of perpetual warring Pakistans.

Europe, in fact, should be a lesson and a warning, rather than an example. She has not seen peace for the last hundred years; and the intervals of peace too have been haunted by fears of fresh wars. This has had its evil effects on the general progress of Europe. "Social progress", writes Prof. Coupland, "the possibilities of which had been enlarged by modern science far beyond the dreams of any previous age, was greatly impeded by the cost of preparing for war, and brought to a stop, if not reversed, by the coming of it".<sup>1</sup> Dr. Beni Prasad writes, "The multiplicity of states specially in the Balkans has been a frequent cause of wars which have adversely affected the quality of European cultures and standards, brought temporary ruin on several countries, and inflicted immense suffering and frustration on the rest of the world. It has enchained Europe to a brand of diplomacy which would have delighted the heart of Machiavelli. It has upheld an ethical dualism tending to lower the quality of European civilization".<sup>2</sup> Do we want all that to be repeated, for decades and decades, in the case of India ?

### MOMENTUM OF DISINTEGRATION

The fact cannot be ignored that if, in face of this geographical unity, India is politically cut up into two parts, a process will set in, which it will be impossible to stop for a long,

1. Coupland: *Constitutional Problem in India*, Vol. III, p. 103.

2. Beni Prasad: *Communal Settlement*, p. 40.

long, time to come. In Dr. Beni Prasad's, words, "Every political tendency has a momentum of its own and struggles against other forces to become a 'psychic dominant.' Once set in motion, disintegration may unfold itself like the remorseless march of the Greek tragedy and refuse to stop at limits which may be prescribed by a pact between the League and the Congress."<sup>1</sup> Having made a separate Muslim state as their goal at Lahore, in 1940, Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League were left with no option but to concede at Madras, in 1941, the South Indian case for Dravidistan. In sheer self-defence, they had to take up a different attitude towards the Sikh demand for Khalistan. Mr. Jinnah characterized the Sikhs as a sub-national group. But who is to decide that whereas the Muslims are a full-fledged nation, the Sikhs are merely a sub-national group? If there is a separate nation in India, the Sikhs argue, it is the Sikh. Who will dispute this claim—certainly the Muslims cannot—and on what ground? Mr. Jinnah said: "We have no designs on our Sikh friends. I only appeal to them to free themselves from external influences, meet us, and I am confident that we shall come to a settlement, which shall reasonably satisfy our Sikh friends,"<sup>2</sup> The words can be easily turned back upon Mr. Jinnah—with the change of a single word 'Sikh' into 'Muslim.' But if reason cannot deter the

1. Ibid, p. 19.

2. In one of his speeches during the Punjab tour of November 1942.



advent of Pakistan, why can there not be a Khalistan within Pakistan, and an Akalistan within Khalistan, and so on; till we come to a single individual trumpeting the idea of his being a nation unto himself and entitled to the possession of a separate state—perhaps his three and a half cubits of ground? The idea of separation is bound to find a ready soil in the Indian States too, "Once the principle of national or quasi-national self-determination were put into operation," writes Prof. Coupland, "would the Marathas or the Rajputs wish to be merged in a single Hindustan? And would the Princes, with the Nizam of Hyderabad at their head, waive their right to a share in the distribution of independence?"

### TREND OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT

To talk of political independence on the basis of religious distinctiveness is to go back not into medieval India, but into medieval Europe. What is remarkable is that even the Islamic people outside India are rapidly outgrowing the doctrine that religion alone could be the basis of a political organization. The movement of pan-Islamism, which itself was more the outcome of political reasons than of religious urge, is irrevocably dead in all Muslim countries outside India. No one in the Muslim countries now thinks in terms of carving out a consolidated Muslim state. In all Muslim countries, from Afghanistan and Iraq to Algiers and

1. Coupland : *Constitutional Problem of India*, Vol. III, p. 104.

Morocco, nationalism is a much more powerful factor. "One of the most remarkable results of the war of 1914-1918", writes coupland, "was the change it brought about in Muslim political thought. For the new tide of nationalism which it set running through all the Muslim countries from Morocco to Afghanistan was not dominated by religious fanaticism..... The dramatic recovery of the Turks from the disasters and humiliations of the war was followed by the fall of the Ottoman Sultanate, the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate, and the complete secularisation of the Turkish State. Thus political pan-Islamism was deprived, at one stroke, of its main foundations. In other Moslem countries—in Egypt, Persia, Iraq, Syria—nationalism, though nowhere so secularist as in Turkey, assumed a similar Western complexion."<sup>1</sup> It would really be surprising if pan-Islamism, discredited everywhere in the Islamic world, and submerged everywhere in the rising tide of nationalistic sentiment, were allowed to take the form of a disruptive force in this country, simply because a poet-philosopher's fancy, disgusted with the failure of the materialistic nationalism of the West, caught it in a moment of desperation, and a lawyer-politician's shrewdness, inspired by a favourable set of circumstances, brought it to the political platform.

While passing, one may also notice the fact that though religion provides the basis for nationalism, it is not religion which the Muslim

1. Ibid, p. 106.

League places at the forefront of its programme, but nationalism. By no stretch of imagination can we call the Muslim League, with Mr. Jinnah as President, a religious body. The demand for Pakistan has been raised not with a view to further the interests of Islam, or the religious interests of the Indian Muslims, but to further the position of Indian Muslims as a political entity. Here we find Dr. Iqbal's idea completely metamorphosed by Mr. Jinnah. Dr. Iqbal had paid primary attention to Islamic religion. Mr. Jinnah is more interested in the political welfare of, rather in the sharing of political power by, the Indian Muslims. Pakistan is not being demanded to translate the Islamic political ideals into an actuality—I, for one, would be happy if the future Indian State could grow on those lines—but to satisfy the lust of a few Muslims for undivided economic exploitation and absolute political power. In fact, Pakistan would be definitely detrimental to the interests of Islamic religion. Any religion which attaches itself to such a weak polity is in constant danger of being thrown to pieces. Moreover, Indian Islam has grown in close collaboration with Hindu India. It has its roots in the entire soil of India, at Ajmer as well as Hyderabad, at Bihar Sharif as well as in the distant outskirts of Bengal. The whole of India is the sacred land of the Muslims, just as it is of the Hindus. Any attempt on the part of the Muslims to cut themselves away from it would be disastrous. It will mean crippling of the Islamic religion and a throttling of the growth of Islamic culture.

## TREND OF INTERNATIONAL THOUGHT

Finally, we have to think of the trend of international thought. "There is everywhere increasing recognition", in Prof. Carr's words, "that self-determination is not quite the simple issue—not the clear-cut choice between mutually exclusive alternatives proclaimed by a cross on a ballot paper—which it seemed in 1919". Everywhere—whether we take up the American continent or South Eastern Europe or the Middle East—there is a tendency towards larger federal organizations. Even in the Balkan states, there is a move to bring a Balkan federation into existence. In fact, democracy everywhere in the world today is faced with the problem of securing an efficient defence system. It is alright to have national feelings. It is quite fascinating to grow from nationhood to statehood—like the chrysalis growing into a butterfly. But it no longer considered as possible to save oneself by mere patriotism or love of democracy. Under the modern world when the fighting weapons have become so scientific, and war has become so deadly, the only way of safety lies in some kind of international organization. Statehood with its traditional idea of sovereignty is a definite obstacle in the way of such international collaboration. We have to get out of the old idea that every nation must grow into a state and every state must be a sovereign state. Nations, even if they are true nations, and not just fake ones, have now to be satisfied with a perfect reassurance, moral and constitutional,



be in keeping with the international trend of thought.

"It is in this interplay between centralisation and devolution", writes Carr, "in this recognition that some human affairs require to be handled by larger, and others by smaller groups than at present, that we must seek a solution to the baffling problem of self-determination"<sup>1</sup>. "The troubles of our day", writes Macartney, "arise out of the modern conception of the national state: out of the identification of the political ideals of all the inhabitants of the State with the national cultural ideals of majority in it. If once this confusion between two things which are fundamentally different can be abandoned, there is no reason why the members of a score of different nationalities should not live together in perfect harmony in the same state"<sup>2</sup>. The world is rapidly moving towards the conception of a multi-national state. The truth of what Lord Acton wrote in 1862 is now being realized. "The combination of different nations in one state", he then wrote, "is as necessary a condition of civilised life as the combination of men in society. Inferior races are raised by living in political union with races intellectually superior. Exhausted and decaying nations are revived by the contact of a younger vitality..... It is in the cauldron of the state that the fusion takes place by which the vigour, the knowledge, and the capacity of one portion

1. E. H. Carr: *Conditions of Peace*, p. 63.

2. C. A. Macartney: *National States and National Minorities*, p. 450.

of mankind may be communicated to another." The entire Indian history of the last one thousand years; including the modern renaissance in Muslim India coming in the wake of the Hindu renaissance, a Syed Ahmed retracing the handiwork of a Ram Mohan Roy and a Jinnah imitating the steps of a Gandhi for creating Muslim nationalism, is a striking commentary on the wisdom of Lord Acton's words.

### A VISION OF THE FUTURE

So far, we have been looking at the problem from the point of view of the past and the present. What about the future? What kind of future do we envisage for India? Is it a future in which India would be atomised, balkanised, divided into a number of petty states like Poland or Paraguay, Siam or Celebes, Malaya or Morocco? Is it the destiny of India, at the culmination of her strong nationalist movement, to get scattered into tiny bits of territories, only to become play-things in the hands of any ambitious foreign power? To-day, India seems to be on the threshold of great possibilities. These are days of large-scale planning. India has plenty of models before her. There are the two Five Years Plans of Russia. There is the Fascist Economy. There is the American New Deal. There is Japan's Co-prosperity Scheme. India can sift and choose anyone of these plans, or synthesise two or three of them, or all of them, and evolve a plan of her own. There is also the Bombay

Plan, as well as the Gandhian plan. With any of these economic plans, India can grow into a strong, self-sufficient economic unit. She can once more think of occupying that economic position in the world which made her at one time the object of lustful conquest at the hands of foreigners.

With this economic development—against, of course, the background of freedom, without which no economic development is possible—India is bound to grow into a great world power. Already she is heading towards that position. During the last five years her prestige has grown very high in the international world. With a tremendous volume of the world opinion in her favour, and with her nationalism unbeaten and unabashed, it will be difficult for the British to deny freedom to India. Once that glow of freedom is there, there is nothing which can check us from making a speedy progress towards occupying a fitting place under the sun. India does not lack in any thing. In Professor Coupland's words, "If greatness is still to be judged in the last resort by military power, she has the potential strength and wealth required to achieve it. Geography has given her a safer strategical position than any other country of comparable size. Her soldiers have proved themselves second to none. Her natural resources would enable her to attain at need a high degree of economic self-sufficiency. She possesses an inexhaustible labour force, and her industrial output for the purpose of the present war shows how easily she could develop an



'industrial' potential, capable of arming her own forces with the modern weapons"<sup>1</sup>. India thus seems to have a rich destiny before her. It seems that nothing less will satisfy her nationalist ardour.

The chief cause of the nationalist movement, with its non-violent resistance and sporadic acts of terrorist crimes, has been to wash away the stigma of an inferior position in the world. The chief source of inspiration for modern India has been a faith in her future. Long back, Vivekanand dreamt that, though politically vanquished and subjugated, India still will become the spiritual leader of the world. Gandhi and Nehru have done a lot to bring that dream to a reality. It seems that nothing can now keep back freedom from India, and it is thought that, with freedom, fresh springs of life will gush forth from the innermost recesses of her soul. Once India is free she will shoot up in the firmament of international prestige and power. This is not idle day-dreaming : these are dreams suffused with reality. But these dreams can come true, and our glorious destiny can take a shape and a form, only if we can stand united, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Scheduled Classes, Indian Christians, and through our common efforts take upon ourselves the new task of building the common future. Pakistan means the shattering of all these dreams at a time when we seem to be almost at a glorious dawn of freedom to trans-

1. Coupland : *Constitutional Problem*, III, pp. 108-109.

reality. Pakistan, as pointed out above, has arisen out of Muslim desperation and agony. Is it too much to ask the Hindus to rise to the occasion and even at the cost of sacrifice of some political power to give their Muslim brethren the greatest amount of assurance, and, for the sake of greater assurance, to weave it into the constitutional machinery of India? Is it also too much to ask the Muslims to outgrow their conception of a separate national state, and in the name of India of the past where their blood has been shed on the same soil as that of the Hindus, in the name of the present, when they suffer from the same political subjugation and spiritual suppression, and in the name of the future, when by their co-operative efforts they can build up a great mosaic of world culture, to out-grow their antiquated doctrines, which they clung to in a moment of desperation, and to join hands with the Hindus in the rebuilding of their common mother-land? On the answer to this question will lie the future of India and, I make myself bold to say, of the world.

## CHAPTER NINE

### Regionalism : Its Dangers

#### THE BACKGROUND

An alternative scheme to Pakistan has been suggested by Prof. Coupland of Oxford University in his *Report on the Constitutional Problem in India*, Part III. He calls it by the grandiose name of 'Regionalism.' He advocates a partition of the country not on communal lines into two sovereign states but on the basis of economic differences into four regions linked up by a weak agency centre. Coupland's scheme is that of a complete Balkanization of India. Yet, it is not completely a novel idea. Coupland traces it back, like all partition schemes to Dr. Iqbal's Allahabad Address. That contention does not seem to be correct. But it has a close family resemblance with the Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan Scheme, the Yeatts Scheme and the Cripps Proposals. It is a little curious that these schemes have all been advocated by Englishmen, or by those Indians who have flourished under bureaucracy's favour. It has been a common mistake to confuse them with the Muslim demand for Pakistan. These schemes have nothing in common with Pakistan. It is true that they have put on the garb of defending Muslim interests, but it is nothing but puerile, mischievous, masquerading. The

various regional schemes have been really brought into existence with a view to take thunder out of the Muslim League demand of Pakistan, on the one side, and to frustrate the nationalist demand for freedom, on the other.

These attempts, I repeat, are nothing but efforts on the intellectual plane to torpedo the idea of Pakistan. They took shape at a time when opposition to the British was becoming serious in the country. The Congress asked the British to 'Quit India.' Mr. Jinnah wanted them to 'Divide and Quit.' The British, being in no mood to quit, seem to have decided to divide the country and stay. We find them particularly sensitive during this period to any attempt on the part of the Congress, or for that matter any representative body, to make the slightest encroachment on the Centre. It was the Congress attempt to do so which brought about the political deadlock in the country. The main point of conflict in 1939 was the desire on the part of the Congress to control the Centre and the determination of the British on their part to resist it. The intellectual play-boys of British imperialism knew that it would not be possible to continue the tussle for all time. A day would come—perhaps not in very remote future—when they would have to part with power at the Centre too. Why not, therefore, render that Centre so helpless and impotent as to perpetually hang on British support? The intellectualists now proceeded to provide a philosophical background to this policy. It was with a view to

bring this 'weak agency Centre'—the pale ghost of a government—into existence that a number of schemes, in quick succession, began to be suggested for partitioning the country. These schemes were all advanced in the name of satisfying the Muslim demand.

### GROWTH OF THE IDEA

The idea of regionalism, like the idea of Pakistan, is traced back to Dr. Iqbal. This poet-philosopher of Islam had undoubtedly talked of 'the creation of autonomous states based on unity of language, race, history, religion and identity of economic interests' and had suggested 'a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State', as an example, but he was interested more in 'pan-Islamism' and 'Muslim consolidation' than in a balkanisation of the country. He had never thought of disrupting the Indian unity or of weakening the central government. In fact, he had never deeply looked into the matter. Prof. Coupland has based his scheme more on Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan's suggestions regarding a division of the country into seven zones. Other schemes of a similar nature have also been propounded from time to time. They all agree with the Sir Sikandar Scheme in as much as they all contemplate the dominantly Muslim areas being placed in two zones, but they differ about the number, or the basis of the division, of Hindu zones. No scheme envisages an abolition of the existing provinces, which will continue to be the major units of administration, but they will all be federally connected with the

regions which, in their own turn, will be similarly linked up with the Centre. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan was possibly the first man to conceive this intermediary plane of the Regional Government. A large number of powers to-day exercised by the Central Government were to be shifted on to the regional plane. The regions were to have their own executive and legislative organs too. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan believed in yoking the Provinces and the States together in each Region.

Prof. Coupland takes Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan's suggestions as the main basis of his theory, but he elaborates it on the lines indicated by Mr. Yeatts, a member of the Indian Civil Service. Mr. Yeatts had suggested a division of India into four regions, on the basis of economic differences which, according to him, principally lay in the great river basins. Coupland suggests a division of India into four zones—Northern India to be divided into (1) the Indus Basin, from Kashmir to Karachi (corresponding to Pakistan), (2) The Ganges-Jumna-Basin, between Punjab and Bengal (corresponding to Hindustan) and (3) the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin, between Bihar and the eastern frontier (corresponding to North East India), and South India to be consolidated into one block. Mr. Yeatts, the author of the original scheme, points out the importance of irrigation and the immense possibilities of the development of hydro-electric power in India as strong arguments in favour of his theory. Coupland also mentions the Tennessee Valley Authority experiment in America, and

is anxious that the effort must be emulated in this country. Mr. Yeatts too, like Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, believed that the Indian States were to be included in these regions, but he held that if they liked they could also keep out. Their decision was not to affect the inauguration of the new constitution on the basis of a division of the country into four parts, each self-sufficient and sovereign.

### THE CRIPPS SCHEME

It might appear a little strange to include the Cripps scheme in this list of regional proposals. But the Cripps scheme too, like the other regional schemes, though claiming to offer a solution for the Muslim demand, attempts to balkanize the country. The Cripps offer leaves to the provinces the option of accession or non-accession to the All-India Union, and, thereby, makes the acceptance and the implementing of the constitution subject to the right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its existing constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession, if it so decides. Another point to be noted in this connection is that these non-acceding provinces have been given the right of forming a separate dominion and having their own constitution, should they so desire. This was accepting the Pakistan idea with vengeance. If the non-acceding provinces, or states, did not wish to form another dominion they could remain so many separate units

scattered all over the country. Another likely alternative would be for some of these non-acceding provinces to form a dominion and for others to stay out. It would be a perfect atomisation of the country based on no other principle but that of provincial self-determination. Looking objectively into things, supposing the Congress Provinces, minus the States, formed the Indian Union, others would form what Mr. Munshi calls the Seceding Union. "But", asks Mr. Munshi, "if, for instance, the Punjab, the States of Baroda and Hyderabad and Bengal want to form part of the Seceding Dominion, where would be the geographical or cultural or for that matter any homogeneity between the different components of the Dominion.....? If the Bombay Province comes into the Indian Dominion and the state of Baroda goes into the Seceding Dominion, it would make it impossible for either dominion to work out its own affairs without interfering with the other....."<sup>1</sup>. These examples can be multiplied.

### THE COUPLAND SCHEME

All these schemes were subsequently gathered up and made into a very scientific-looking plea for a regional division of the country into four parts by Prof. Coupland. He gave the whole thing the shape and form of a regular science. Prof. Coupland suggested that the river basins scheme as expounded by Mr. Yeatts was to be put into practice immediately.

1. K. M. Munshi : *The Indian Deadlock*.



He gave flesh and blood to the skeleton of Mr. Yeatts' idea. He drew up a charter for the constitution of these various regions and for the central government, which he calls 'a weak agency centre'. He has advocated that the national loyalties have to be limited, and the provincial loyalties to be exalted, to the plane of regional allegiance. He thinks that this would be the only way of meeting the communal demand. He also suggests that this is also an effort to preserve the unity of India, to which he pays so much of lip-homage. Like Mr. Yeatts, Prof. Coupland also is anxious to bring in the Indian states; if however, they refuse to join, the regional way is not to be abandoned, but to be pursued without them. Prof. Coupland has given us an outline of the executive and legislative authorities which are to be constituted in the centre, in the regions, and in the provinces, and their inter-relationship. He has given us a fairly comprehensive scheme for the division of power between the various governments. In fact, he has tried to make the scheme completely fool-proof.

A point which has to be very strongly noted in this connection is that Prof. Coupland carried an immense amount of influence with the Churchill-Amery group and his scheme had almost an official flavour about it. Even now we find Prof. Coupland's idea quite prominent in the British press. We should not be surprised if some day the spokesmen of the British Government officially come forward with a scheme propounded on the lines suggested by

Coupland in order to weaken the national demand for independence on the one side and the Muslim League demand for Pakistan on the other. We have therefore to take the scheme in all seriousness.

### PRINCIPLES OF REGIONALISM

A regional theory starts with very high-sounding pretensions. It claims to find a *via media* between the Hindu desire for maintaining the unity of India and the Muslim demand for partition. It asks both the Hindus and the Muslims to make some sacrifices. The Muslims are asked to relax their demand for the partition of the country and the Hindus to give up their faith in the 'logic of democracy'. Regionalism appeals in the name of preserving the unity of the country. It claims to be a compromise between the right to nationhood, on the one side—which Coupland is prepared to concede at the mere asking—and the right to self-determination, on the other—which, by the way, he would like to hold back. The advocates of the regional theory point out that the Muslims have got two demands to make: (1) they want a separate national homeland for themselves, and (2) they want their national territories to be independent. Once again, they propose to bring about a distinction between the two demands. They are quite willing to concede the Muslim demand for the creation of a separate home-land, or even a group of home-lands, but so far as the demand for the creation of a full-fledged sovereign state

is concerned, they point out that such an idea is antiquated. It is reverting to the outworn philosophy of early 19th century of Europe and to ignore the doctrine of the multi-national state, which was preached by Lord Acton as early as 1862. They point out that the Muslim League demand for partition is after all not very old, and on that ground they are willing to discredit it.

They point out that since some kind of co-ordination between the various governments of the country will have to be established, it will be necessary to have a central government, but tell us that it would not be advisable to have a Centre like the one that we have been thinking of throughout, or even the Centre of the 1935 Act. In fact, the whole idea of federalism, which was the basis of the 1935 Act, has got to be diluted and some kind of intermediary state between a confederacy and a federation has to be brought into existence. They advocate what they call 'a radically different kind of federation, not only different in the character of the units that compose it but different also in the principles and the performance of its quasi-federal institutions'. For this they ask us to think in radical terms and to shake off our traditional ideas of organisation of federal government.

### POLITICAL MERITS OF THE SCHEME

The scheme has been very much applauded from the economic point of view, but it claims a number of political merits also. In the first

place, it claims to concede the Muslim League demand for the creation of separate homelands for the Muslims, the Indus and the Delta Regions corresponding with Pakistan and North-East India. Secondly, it claims to establish a balance between the Hindu majority and the Muslim majority regions. It confesses that it is able to meet the Muslim League demand only half-way. It provides homelands to the Muslims, but does not recognize their right to break away from the country. It claims to preserve the unity of India. It thus tries to satisfy a number of demands at one and the same time. On the one side, it claims to meet the nationalist demand for the transfer of power from British to Indian hands—it does not matter how shadowy and illusory that power will be. On the other hand, it proposes to satisfy the Hindu demand for maintaining the unity of the country, and at the same time to favour the Muslim demand for the creation of separate homelands. These are all very tall claims, and let us see if they can stand the test of a close examination.

### THE REGIONAL CONSTITUTION

For this we have to take up the proposed constitution of India based on the theory of regionalism. We might begin with the Centre—though it will be shocking to find that the moment we try to deal with it, it seems to be crumbling into dust almost within our grasp. Regionalism advocates a weak central government, and justifies it on the ground, that a strong central government would be a threat to the unity of the country.

alternative under the Indian conditions seems to be no centre. One may not find much to criticise in Prof. Coupland's enumeration of the powers of the Centre. The principle which he has laid down is quite sound. He says that the minimum powers which any Indian Centre must possess must be those which reflect the unity of India as seen from abroad, those which concern her relations with the outer world. He confines these to three important departments: (1) Foreign Affairs and Defence, (2) External Trade or Tariff Policy, and (3) Currency. This looks quite sound. Coupland discusses the question of Communications to be transferred to the Centre or being controlled by some kind of inter-Regional arrangement, and gives his verdict in favour of the latter. This also seems to be quite in line with the federal principle which advocates maximum of decentralization and minimum of centralization.

Coupland makes it very clear that the inter-Regional Union will be very different from a Federation, just as it will be very different from a Confederation also. It will be an intermediary step. It will be different from a federation in as much as a federation is (a) generally concerned with relatively weak political units, and (b) is so devised as to combine the principle of national unity with the principle of local autonomy. Regionalism, on the other hand, proposes to cut up India into 'a number of great states which could be wholly independent', and to bring a Centre into existence which will be a purely inter-Regional institution, its authority

resting solely on the Regions which could in theory exercise all the powers of government separately on their own account, but decide to share some of them. Writes Prof. Coupland: "The inter-Regional Centre would possess only those minimum powers, not on the direct authority of an all-India electorate, but as the joint instrument or agent of the Regions." The sting is in the tail. Coupland's Centre would be a mere agency, the members of its executive and legislatures acting as agents of their Regions.

It is not a very great satisfaction to be told by Prof. Coupland that Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan was thinking of an even weaker Centre. Sir Sikandar's conception of a centre was, as opposed to that of a domineering hostile centre looking for opportunities to interfere with the work of provincial governments, that of "a sympathetic agency.....a body set up by the units to control and supervise the central administrative machinery and to see that the work entrusted to it by the provinces is carried on efficiently, amicably and justly". Sir Sikandar was prepared to call it even a "Co-ordination Committee". In fact, Coupland's Centre would be hardly more effective. He thinks that his Regionalism goes further than a Confederacy. "The latter is only a league, only a kind of alliance. It possesses no power or authority of its own. The decision on which the units are agreed must be executed by the units at their expense. An inter-Regional Centre, on the other hand, would be a Government. It would give its own orders to its own

soldiers and its own officials. It would pay its own way.”<sup>1</sup> If words were enough, we ought to have stopped our fight for freedom long back !

The cat seems to be out of the bag when we come to study the constitution of the legislature and the executive of the inter-Regional Centre. Coupland—as against Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, who had advocated an unicameral legislature of the same size as suggested by the 1935 scheme, with 33% seats reserved for the representatives of the provinces, and 33% out of the remaining 250 seats to be reserved for the Muslims—suggests a serious reduction in the size of the legislature, together with the establishment of ‘balance’ between the Hindu-majority and the Muslim-majority Regions. According to this scheme, the Muslims who are 24% in population would be able to capture 50% seats in the Central Legislature, if they wished. The executive would be similarly reduced in size and importance. It would be dealing with a few departments only. It would be a statutory coalition government. Coupland further proposes to torpedo its shadowy existence by suggesting that it might be organized on the Swiss model, elected by the legislature but not responsible to it for day-to-day administration, its few portfolios distributed equally among the Hindu and Muslim Regions, its President being alternately a Hindu and a Muslim. Perhaps disgusted with the fumbling, fawning feebleness of his own creature, Coupland winds up the

1. Coupland : *The Constitutional Problem in India* vol. III, p. 130.

whole scheme by suggesting, as a parting shot, that, instead of having a separate legislature and a separate executive, we might revert to the old joint council system existing in the early days of the British Raj.

What is more surprising is that this scheme, which offers to take India back to the chaotic, corrupt days of the East India Company, is offered as a solution of the communal problem of to-day! It is claimed that it would be able to maintain a 'balance' between the different regions. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan's proposals are given up because he was thinking of two Muslim and five Hindu zones. Coupland certainly has a greater regard for Muslim interests than Sir Sikandar ever could have! He proposes to improve the situation by reducing the number of Hindu zones to two. It is pointed out that this will be able to solve the communal problem as nothing else has done so far—as this would immediately replace communal loyalties by loyalty to 'great countries' to which the various Hindu and Muslim representatives of the central Joint Council would belong. Coupland makes an appeal to the Hindus to agree with the plan on the ground that the idea of a strong central executive and a great national legislature—towards which India was supposed to be moving between 1861 and 1944—are no longer a practical proposition under the existing circumstances. For that, India has yet to be born into a nation. "Patience", the learned professor soothingly advises us, "is the queen of political virtues, and it is clear enough now



that, if the peoples of India are ever to become one nation, it will take time". Prof. Coupland, however, kindly, does not rule out the possibility of the dream of India becoming a nation materialising in some dim, distant future, but as long as the miracle does not happen, the Hindus have to accept a compromise solution. Prof. Coupland makes an equally strong appeal to the Muslims to give up their demand for a vivisection of the country, and to accept the Regional solution which would place them in a position at least equal to that of the Hindus. It is fair, therefore, that we thoroughly discuss the economic, cultural, communal and political aspects of Regionalism before finally throwing it over.

### THE ECONOMIC ASPECT

Regionalism proposes to replace the communal outlook of politics by the economic. Certainly a progressive-looking stand, but what are the facts? Is Regionalism, judged even from the purely economic point of view, the best method of improving the condition of things in India? Conceding that the development both of irrigation and hydro-electric power are essential for the economic growth of India, they are hardly the most important projects before the country, and they can be developed under any kind of state, Pakistan or Akhand Hindustan. All that will be necessary is inter-Provincial cooperation. They hardly call for the drastic method of Regionalism. Moreover, most of the Regional schemes fall short of taking the economic aspect fully into consideration.

The Sikandar Hayat Khan scheme does not even pretend to do so. If his scheme of zonal division is adopted, the Mysore state would be cut away from its natural economic moorings and made to join not Madras, or Madras states, or Coorg, but Bombay, Western India states and the C. P. states, and the C. P. states would be clipped out of their surrounding region, which would go with Bihar and Orissa states on the one side and the Rajputana states on the other, and made to join the Bombay states and Hyderabad. It is difficult to understand how any economic interest can be served by thus arbitrarily rooting out territories and patching them up anywhere.

The Yeatts scheme, which claims to be more scientific and the Coupland scheme, which possibly would be understood as the last word in scientific thinking, too suffer from the same defects, though in a less intense form. The Yeatts scheme claims to be based on river-basins division, but it is difficult to understand how, from that point of view, the separation of the delta region from the river basin can be justified. Unitary control over a river system established with a view to promote planned economic development must cover the delta as well as the basin. Again, one fails to understand on what basis the whole of Deccan is constituted into one Region. As Mr. Munshi points out, "Even from the point of view of physical geography, Prof. Coupland's regionalism has no meaning. In his discussions of the river zones he blissfully ignores the river-basins when

it suits him. Rajputana is not on the Indus. Bengal which he takes out of the Ganges Delta practically depends upon the Ganges and its tributaries. Orissa which is lumped together with the Ganges Delta has a river system of its own and has nothing to do with the Ganges basin or with the Rajputana states. The Deccan has no river system of its own".<sup>1</sup>

Both Yeatts and Coupland have compared their regional schemes with the Tennessee Valley Authority in America. But the comparison is wrong and misleading. Firstly, there is a strong adverse criticism regarding the achievements of the T. V. A., For some time all that T. V. A. could do was to convert the whole valley into a dust-bowl: it was only the intervention of the strong national government which could set matters right. There is also a strong section of political thinkers which condemns it as an unwarrantable invasion by the federal government of a field that rightly belongs to local authority and private initiative. Secondly, it is generally forgotten by those who bring in the analogy that the T. V. A. is an experiment in centralization and not in decentralization. It means transfer by the various states, through which the Tennessee river runs, of part of their sovereignty to a central authority more or less under the control of the central government: it does not mean devolution of power by the central government, but means additional power to it. Thirdly, the executive authority of the T. V. A. is very much restricted, and is confined

1. K. M. Munshi : *The Indian Deadlock*, pp. 103-4.

mainly to control of floods, improvement of river navigation and the development and transmission of electric power. In the case of regional units the advocates of the scheme propose to make them the repositories of real power.

Then, the principle of making economic regionalism alone the determining factor in the formation of political units seems to be thoroughly unsound and, as far as its applicability to India is concerned, thoroughly impracticable. If applied to India, it is bound to cut across a number of sociological factors, such as language, history, culture etc. which cannot be considered as less important for maintaining the solidarity of a political unit. In view of this, it may not be irrelevant to ask whether a critical study of the economic factors leaves regionalism as the only, or the best, alternative. As Coupland himself admits, all that the regions purport to do can be done by consultative cooperation between the provinces. One, therefore, fails to understand why there should be a proposal to make the cumbrous addition of Regions to the already complicated structure of the Indian Government. Moreover, if the provincial units are made to retain their

the North-Western fringe of Rajputana and Sind, but there is no earthly reason why it should be applied to the entire country, even to the Hindu-majority blocks which definitely have nothing to gain by it.

As a matter of fact, the whole basis of the application of the regional principle to a zonal division of India is as unscientific as anything can be. "The use of the word 'Regionalism' itself," as Mr. Munshi puts it, "has suffered a translation in the hands of Prof. Coupland, just as Bottom got translated in the *Mid-summer Night's Dream* when he put on the ass's head".<sup>1</sup> Regionalism, as it is used in current scientific language, is a protest, on the basis of humanism, against a school which made physical environments the only determinant of the fortunes of man. Even if we exclude, for the time being, the human factor—"the psychological make-up of the human aggregation in India"—as Coupland has done, and confine our study merely to its economic aspect, it is as clear as anything—and even a tyro in geographical knowledge will corroborate it—that the whole of India is one, indivisible economic Region. The world is fast moving towards the concept of an optimum economic unit—the tendency is very clear in the Americas, in the Middle Eastern regions, even on the warring continent of Europe—and, from that point of view, India is one of the few countries in the world—the other two being America and Russia—which is clearly marked out by all geographical and economic

1. Ibid, p. 102.

considerations to be one. What is more important is that this unity has already been established in India to a fairly great extent—through a close and comprehensive network of roads and railways, posts and telegraphs, an uniform system of currency and contract, joint stock banks, a constant movement of men and material from one part of the country to another. What could easily become the basis of a great country-wide economic planning would be rudely shattered into bits, if the ugly regional barriers are allowed to crop up in the country.

### THE CULTURAL ASPECT

The regional scheme pays scant attention to considerations of culture. As already pointed out, it cuts across the frontiers of language, history, culture, traditions etc., which are generally considered essential for maintaining the solidarity of a political unit. The Sir Sikandar Scheme is open to greatest criticism on this score. Under the scheme, whereas the Gujrati and the Malayalam-speaking areas are huddled together (under zone No. 5), the Marathas, Telagus and the Kannadas are proposed to be split up all over. In the Yeatts scheme as well, as in the Coupland plan too, we come across many glaring violations of the cultural aspect of the problem. Rajputana, for example, which has developed, due to its history, tradition, culture and outlook, a certain homogeneity, is proposed to be broken up into three parts. Its southern states, Banswara, Danta, Dungarpur and Palanpur, are to be passed

on as a gift to the Deccan, its eastern states, Bharatpur, Bundi, Dholpur, Karauli and Kotah are to merge with the Ganges-basin Region, whereas its remaining states are to be joined to the Indus Region. But Rajputana is not the only homogeneous cultural unit which is proposed to be divided. If the principle of division on the basis of river basins is to be fully applied, the Sikhs would have to be divided into two separate Regions—since Ambala Division along with Alwar and Jind states belongs to the Gangetic Region rather than to the Indus Region. Any deviation from this would involve clash with the principle of economic regionalism. The problem of Orissa also would be equally perplexing. Orissa is a small province, but has developed a certain amount of homogeneity of culture. Having no social or cultural kinship either with Bengal or with Madras, it will be difficult to decide where it would have to be placed. So far as its rivers are concerned, the Mahanadi links it with C.P., whereas the Brahmani carries its waters into Chhota Nagpur. Coupland places Orissa neither in the Delta Region nor in the Deccan but in the Ganges-basin Region. One fails to understand why.

### THE COMMUNAL ASPECT

The acid test, however, of the success of the scheme would be its ability to solve the communal problem. It undoubtedly confirms, and even expands, the political demarcation of Muslim 'homelands', the Indus and the Delta

Regions corresponding with Pakistan and North East India. But in expansion it weakens the position of these states from the point of view of their being the preserves of Islamic culture. The Regional scheme makes the Hindu population of these Regions very much larger. Let us look into figures. Whereas under the Rajaji scheme of partition the proportion of Hindus and Muslims in Pakistan would be 17:83 and in North-East India 29:71, and under the Muslim League scheme it would be 30:70 and 45:55, under the Coupland plan, it would be 40:60 and 45:55 respectively. One fails to understand how this adhesion of a larger number of Hindus in the Muslim blocks is likely to solve the communal problem. It will certainly leave out a lesser number of Muslims in the two Hindu Regions, which might give the Hindus a better chance to evolve their own pattern of culture, unhindered and unobstructed by the Muslims, but it will hardly be doing a service to the Muslims to load them with almost an equal percentage of Hindus, who are likely to demand and play an effective part in the government and legislation of these regions. Will that satisfy the Muslim desire for self determination?

Leaving aside the question of development of Islamic culture in its pristine purity, for which the Indian Muslims seem to be so keen, will Regionalism ease the communal tension in the country? Since the Regions are proposed to be demarcated on communal basis—two Hindu and two Muslim Regions are to be brought into existence perpetually to confront



other—they are likely to be more at loggerheads, than at peace, with each other. Each of the two blocks would be found with its own communal problem. The Muslims in the Hindu blocks might resent the growingly Hindu temper of administration, and the Muslim-majority of the other two blocks might feel inclined to take up their case. If feelings between the two communities in the two Muslim blocks become estranged, they might lead to a free fight, since Hindus and Muslims would be almost equal in population—40:60 in the one case and 45:55 in the other. Since these Regions are going to be sovereign units, it would be difficult for the central government to check such a civil war. Moreover, one wonders if the weak agency centre, the creature of Regional legislatures, would have the courage, or the strength, even to make such an attempt. All that one can imagine about such a situation would be that the mighty imperialist hand of Britain, which would be the prop behind the agency centre, will thrust itself into the cob-web of illegality and disorder, tear open the flimsy mask of sovereignty put on by the regional governments and assert itself !

### THE POLITICAL ASPECT

In fact, the whole trend of regional thinking seems to be moving in the direction of cutting up Nationalism into petty geographical loyalties. Regionalism claims to preserve the unity of India. It would be difficult to imagine a more preposterous claim. Regionalism proposes to cut

up India into four states, 'four great countries' in Prof. Coupland's language, each with its own nationalism. But can we think of such mushroom nationalism ever coming to life? The Regions are most arbitrarily carved out. They violate all canons of cultural homogeneity, or even common economic interests. People can hardly be expected to develop a loyalty and a patriotism to the Delta Basin or Block No. 4 overnight! What will actually happen will be something like this. A severe blow would be struck at the mighty growth of the nationalist sentiment that we have been able to cultivate during the last half-century of tears and toils, and our patriotism would henceforth flow into provincial grooves. A Region would hardly be able to collect up the provincial loyalties, which are very real and deep in this country. To-day, they are subordinated to loyalty to the Nation. In the absence of any such ideal, the provincial loyalties are bound to gain tremendous strength. Bengalis and Assamese would not rest satisfied for a very long time in hanging on to the Delta Basin: they would like to become independent. Similarly, Punjab and Sind and N. W. F. P. are bound to break away from the Indus Region, and the U. P. and Bihar and Orissa to have their own independent governments, and so on. The momentum of disintegration initiated by this balkanization of the country into four regions would be so strong that, within a short period, India is bound to atomise, and break up into innumerable petty 'states', an Andhra here, an Utkala there, a Vidarbha or a Mahakoshala

interspersed over some other area, all claiming to be 'independent,' but all dancing, most disingeniously at, the tune played by the far-off Britain.

No, Pakistan would anyway be a better alternative. Pakistan, at least envisages the growth of two autonomous states, one Hindu and the other Muslim, both preserving and cultivating their own cultures. We can imagine these two sovereign states someday bursting through the clouds of communal misunderstanding and entering into a closer collaboration with each other, something like an 'anschluss': sheer geographical unity and community of economic interests and reasons of defence might drive them in that direction. My Austrian friends tell me that though Austria is in every way a separate and homogeneous cultural unit, it will always be driven by sheer economic necessity to seek an intimate partnership with Germany, whatever it might cost her in terms of culture etc. Pakistan will be exactly in the same position. Perhaps we might give her greater assurances than Germany could ever give Austria. Again, behind the Muslim demand for Pakistan there is at least a serious conviction—however mistaken that seriousness might be and however strongly we might deplore that conviction—that the Muslims are a nation. As such, Pakistan would mean at least the satisfaction of a 'national' urge, and it will be this sentiment which might be able to preserve her, when all other circumstances are against her. But behind the regional division of India, there is neither

hope for the future nor justice in the immediate present. A state like the one conceived by Prof. Coupland—regions balancing regions, communities confronting communities, provinces facing provinces in grim conflict—can hardly play any effective part anywhere. On the one hand, it will be torn by internal dissensions, regional, communal and ethnological; on the other, it will be a plaything in the hands of the British. Such will be the end and culmination—will it also be the goal and consummation?—of Prof. Coupland's ingenious plan of Regionalism.

## CHAPTER TEN.

# Outlines of a Federal Constitution for India.

### THE BACKGROUND

The cultural unity of India is an indisputable historical fact. Its foundation were laid on the day on which the Aryans, fresh from the the Asiatic Steppes, decided to include and absorb, within the wide orbit of their highly spiritual culture, the original inhabitants of this country. The Indian culture of the pre-historic ages, as so ably expounded by Kshiti-mohan Sen and other writers, was a synthesis between the Aryan and the Dravidian cultures. The Aryans freely adopted the Dravidian gods and methods of worship, even their language and literature. The Aryans dominated the political life of the country, but the Dravidians controlled the mainsprings of its cultural life. Siva and Durga are the emblems of this cultural fusion. Streams of foreign invaders, Sakas, Scythians, Kushas, Hunas, Yeuchis and others, continued to flow into the widening ocean of the Aryo-Dravidian culture, and as they dropped into it, they were quickly merged. Within two or three generations of their stay in India, we find these foreigners worshipping Indian gods and adopting Indian

names. It was out of this fusion of innumerable cultures that there came into existence what we call the Hindu culture today.

This Hindu culture was beginning to take a definite shape and form, to crystallize and harden, when the Muslims came to India. But it had not yet lost its power of assimilation and absorption. In South India, where Islam had entered peacefully, a synthesis between the Hindu and the Muslim cultures, particularly in the religious field, had begun almost immediately. But in Northern India, due to the semi-civilized, and even savage methods adopted by the Muslim invaders, the first reactions had not been very pleasant, and the Hindus had decided, in sheer self-defence, to protect their social institutions behind strong walls of orthodoxy. But as soon as the storm of invasion subsided, the onrushing waves of Islamic culture began to eat into the vitals of the social ostracism, and gradually, as centuries slipped by, not only our political life but our religious faith and beliefs, customs and manners, language and literature, sculpture and painting, all came under the strong influence of Islamic culture. On the other hand, the Muslims who came to India from outside countries, and kept on coming in a ceaseless stream, began to imbibe more and more the essentials of the Indian culture. Out of this inter-action of two great civilizations, which are being woven, like warp and woof, into a common fabric there arose what we today call by the name of the Indian culture. Any attempt to separate the two now woul

nearly throw this beautiful handiwork of several centuries into an ugly jumble. As Sir Herbert Risley has put it, "Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social types, languages, customs and religions which strikes the observer in India there can still be discerned a certain underlying unity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin."

In view of the political conditions of today, Indian as well as international, it has become all the more necessary to maintain this historical and cultural unity of India. We are in conflict with a mighty imperial power: it is only on the basis of national unity that we can hope to carry that conflict to a successful end. World-forces seem to be moving in the direction of Indian freedom: they have, of course, got to be accelerated by our own endeavour. Once India attains her freedom, she will have to play an important part in world-affairs. The shifting of the political centre of gravity from the Atlantic to the Pacific will throw even greater responsibility on her shoulders. The world-war of to-morrow will, most probably, be fought in the Pacific theatre, and in that war India will have to take an important share. 'Quit Asia,' the latest slogan and battle cry of Indian politics carries within it the same flame, which has today ignited the whole of Indonesia. India may be in a helpless condition today. The British and the Dutch empires may succeed in their efforts to crush this battle of Asia's independence. But sooner or later—sooner rather than later—the crusts are bound to be

broken and the whole continent of Asia might be in the flames of revolt. India's freedom is linked up with Asia's freedom: we cannot think of a free India in a slave Asia. The battle of freedom anywhere in Asia is India's own battle. India has to get ready to play an important part in the reconstruction of the entire continent. For this, she needs strength and more strength.

The two world-wars, and the years of confusion between the two world-wars, have made it perfectly clear that it has become impossible for any small state to maintain its neutrality, or aloofness, in a warring world. In fact, the small states have no future. The future belongs either to big powers like America or Russia, which have been designed by nature herself to be self-sufficient and strong, or to those geographically contiguous and economically inter-dependent small nations, which are willing to throw overboard their antiquated notions of national sovereignty and to forge strong ties of political and economic unity. The Latin States of South America, the democratic countries of Western Europe, the Arab states of the Middle East, can think of creating such links. India with her immense possibilities, stands on a par with America and Russia. If she is free and if she can properly develop her economic resources, she can easily be counted among the great powers of the world. But she cannot rise to that greatness unless her economic resources are first exploited to their fullest. The politics of each country is today



closely inter-linked with her economics. If the vast economic resources scattered far and wide over this great land of ours have got to be fully exploited, it will need a strong centralized government. Every country that undertakes huge plans of economic reconstruction needs a strong centralized government or has to create one, if it is not already in existence. The one indirect gain that we have obtained due to the British rule in India is the feeling of political and economic unity. Today, when the future of our country seems to depend on this unity, any attempt to throw it over, along with the British rule, would appear like national suicide.

But we cannot ignore another important factor too. In our country, forces of decentralization have existed, hand in hand, with forces of centralization. Their roots lie deep in her history, though they have become particularly strong during the last half-century. In seventh century B. C., right at the beginning of our historic age, there existed sixteen *mahajan-padas*, or independent states, in India, whose boundary-lines seem to be repeating themselves in the various administrative re-organizations of the Moghul and the British empires. Whenever a new empire begins to grow—and such attempts are not many in the vast history of our country they begin to fade away and disappear but as soon as the crumbling of the empire begins, they again begin to take a shape and a form. If we look at it from the cultural point of view, we can clearly see that within the wide orbit of the Indian culture, there are more

than a dozen independent cultures. To say that there is no deep cultural difference between Bengal and Maharashtra, Punjab or Gujrat, Sind or Malayalam, Orissa and Tamil-nad is to close one's eyes to the realities of the situation. The diversity of our provincial cultures is a solid historical fact. In fact, the diversity of culture in India is based not so much in religion as in geography. It is very difficult to distinguish between a Bengali Hindu and a Bengali Muhammadan, but a Bengali Hindu can be easily distinguished from a Punjabi Hindu. A Maharashtrian Muslim feels more at home with a Hindu of his own province than with a Muslim in the United Provinces or in the North-West Frontier. Along with the growth of our national sentiments, there has developed in the Bengali a greater love for Bengal, in the Gujrati a great sentiment for the Gurjara-desh, in the Maratha a greater loyalty for the traditions and culture of Maharashtra. Even in Utkal and Vidarbha, Andhra and Bundelkhand, Rajasthan and Malwa, the feelings of local patriotism are on the increase.

In spite of the cultural differences between the Hindus and the Muslims not being so deep, the fact cannot be denied that the gulf between the two communities is growing wider and wider every day. The difference is not confined to the sphere of politics. In fact, even though efforts are being made to bridge it up in the political sphere, it is growing more and more in the cultural sphere. The cultural differences between the Hindus and the Muslims

are ever on the increase. All efforts to patch up these differences made through the medium of adopting Hindustani, or Hindi-Hindustani, in the field of language, have signally failed. The difference between Hindi and Urdu is growing—the Hindus are turning towards Sanskritized Hindi, and the Muslims are taking to an Urdu, which is being daily loaded with fresh words from Persian and Arabic. Even the Muslims of Bengal, Gujrat and the far south are engaged in evolving separate styles of their provincial languages. The differences in dress and diet, life and manners, too are growing. They are becoming more indifferent towards each others' fairs and festivals though they are, at the same time, cultivating a greater interest in their own fairs and festivals. It is this growing cultural diversity between the two people that lies at the root of the two-nations theory.

We have, thus, to realize the need and urgency of India's political unity on the one side and to acknowledge her cultural diversity, rooted in her communal and provincial differences, on the other. The greatest need of today is to reconcile these two important factors. What we generally do today is to ignore or submerge our cultural diversities in our great desire for political unity and freedom—it is this mentality which lies behind our foolish opposition of the two-nations theory and the fanatic cry of *Akhand Hindustan*. We should welcome the fact of our cultural diversities: it adds to our glory and greatness as a nation. It is this diversity which will enrich our Indian

culture—the only condition is that we should be able to avoid the mistake of entangling our cultural problems with our political issues. In other words, we should be able to distinguish between a *political* unit and a *cultural* unit. From the political and the economic points of view, it is necessary that the entire country should remain under one strong, centralised administration but from the cultural point of view, we can afford to divide it into various smaller units. In some of these units, the Muslim culture will predominate, in others, the Hindu culture will have a decisive influence; but everywhere, it will have a strong local bias, and each unit will have the fullest scope for the development of its culture. The day on which we learn to reconcile our cultural diversities with the conception of our political unity, a great many of our problems will immediately be able to resolve themselves.

### INDIA AND FEDERATION

A federal constitution alone will be able to harmonize the various conflicting tendencies and the seemingly antagonistic interests. The only type of constitution which can suit India will be a federal constitution. A federal constitution is a comparatively recent discovery in politics, but it has been able to meet a number of difficult problems very successfully. A federal constitution is a product of circumstances in which we find a number of political entities desiring to come together for the sake of improving their strategic, political and economic

conditions, but at the same time anxious to retain their autonomy. The impulses which generally govern the establishment of a federal constitution are, as a writer points out, (i) the spiritual ideal of national unity, (ii) the desire to promote common economic interests and the amicable resolution of common problems, and considerations of defence and international prestige. Dicey, the famous constitutional authority, mentions two requisite conditions for the successful establishment of a federal constitution : (1) a body of states so closely connected by locality, by history, by race or the like as to be capable of bearing in the eyes of their inhabitants an impress of common nationality, and (2) the existence of a sentiment of unity among the inhabitants of the states which propose to unite. Federalism, thus, proposes to reconcile two opposite tendencies. On the one side, there is a desire for union, on the other, a determination to maintain one's own identity and independence. But it is exactly this problem of making these two opposites meet that a federal constitution is generally brought into existence. A federation is able to satisfy all those requirements which keep a people united and also to guarantee as great an internal autonomy to the various federating units as is compatible with the existence of a central government.

I know that strong arguments are sometimes brought forward to prove the unsuitability of a federal constitution to India. It is pointed out that a federal government is weak in com-

parison with a unitary government. A federal government is said to be not only weak but also retrograde in character. It is said to be weak because it involves a division of authority, and whenever there is a distribution of power and a division of authority, it is bound to lead to weakness; it is said to be retrograde and reactionary because it enables progressive legislation to be successfully opposed by vested interests, which generally have a definite representation in a federal constitution. It is also pointed out that a federal government is more or less a static government. It may be useful for maintaining the *status quo*, but it cannot give a proper chance for rapid progress to be made in the direction of social reform. J. H. Morgan thinks that a federal constitution is 'a most complex, the most litigious, the most disconsolating and, in the execution of the law, the weakest of all forms of government.' "The very fact," writes Morgan, "that it involves a division of 'internal' sovereignty alike in the legislative sphere and the executive between the federation and its constituent 'States' or Provinces, results in the citizen who lives under it owing a double 'allegiance,' and the truth of the scriptural aphorism that no man can serve two masters is writ large in the political history of all federal communities. As Mr. Cannaway, K. C., an Australian writer puts it, "Under a federal form of polity the sense of duty towards the national government is not likely to be strongly felt." Mr. Cannaway thought that the adoption of federalism in

Australia had proved a disastrous failure, and that the lawlessness so apparent of late years in the U. S. A. too was due to the 'demoralising' effect of this dual allegiance.

These arguments are supposed to apply with much greater force to conditions in India. It is pointed out that India is already under a strong centralized government which has been responsible for creating the whole movement of nationalism. If a federal constitution is established, centrifugal tendencies are bound to gain strength and the fabric of unity which is perhaps the most remarkable achievement of the British rule in India will be shattered. It is further emphasised that India has been a victim for centuries of disintegrating forces. If, therefore, any attempt is now made to weaken its strong government the same tendencies which, time and again, have thrown the Maratha against the Rajput, the Rajput against the Sikh, the Sikh against the Afghan, the Afghan against the Moghuls, will once more become rampant in this country. Above all, it is pointed out that federalism goes counter to the entire trend of Indian history. "Do they (the advocates of a federal constitution for India)," asked Lord Phillimore, in a House of Lords debate, on June 19, 1935, "find a tendency to federation in the long history of India? Do they think that this hotch-potch of intricately elected Assemblies and the Governor-General's discretion will stand for five years after it has been set up?" A federation is undoubtedly a complicated administrative machinery, and its very com-

plexity is often brought forward as an important argument against its introduction in India.

The arguments that are generally brought forward against the introduction of a federal constitution in India are threefold. It is said that it will (1) come in the way of a fuller development of Indian nationalism, (2) thwart the constitutional development both of British India and the Indian States and (3) suppress forces of liberty and democracy. The Act of 1935 seems to have been purposely designed to give a practical shape to all these objections to the establishment of a federal constitution in India. It was likely to throttle the growth of nationalism and encourage a spirit of provincialism. It clearly had proposed to use the Indian States for creating difficulties in the way of the constitutional development of British Indian Provinces. It is also true that if it had been brought into force, it would have struck at the very roots of liberty and democracy in India. Lord Phillimore had clearly these aspects of the proposed federation in view, when he asked in his House of Lords speech. "Can you not have liberty without federation?.....what exactly are the reasons why the government are so anxious to force the development of the Indian constitution into this particularly rigid channel? Is it possibly just because they fear that they cannot ride the whirlwind if Indian political development is allowed to follow its natural bent?" But all these criticisms were aimed at the federation conceived by the Act of 1935. The federal scheme of the 1935 Act



cannot be taken to be the last word in Indian federalism. In fact, to call that scheme as federal is to distort the meaning of the term. It was about the federal scheme of the 1935 Act that J. C. Morgan wrote, "In all other federal systems, the division of legislative powers is, at its worst, no more than dual—federal law on the one hand and the law of the constituent states on the other. Divided authority is, of course, always weak, but the more divided it is, the weaker it will be. The division recommended by the White Paper attains the dimensions of disruption. It is not merely dual; it is sextuple. I find that under these proposals.....our Indian fellow subjects, each and every one of them, will own obedience to six, in fact, seven, different and often conflicting legislative authorities, three of them centred, but hardly united, in the multiple personality of the Governor-General, who may find considerable difficulty in agreeing not merely with his ministers, but with himself....." Now, it is not on the lines of this rickety federalism that we have got to raise our constitutional structure of tomorrow. In fact, the Act of 1935 will serve as a lesson and a warning, rather than an example, for our constitution-making body.

The following three points may be mentioned in favour of the establishment of a federal constitution for India: (1) It is in a federal construction alone that we can hope to find a solution of the manifold problems of our country; (2) Whatever be the constitutional

position of the Indian states, they are bound to be affected by their closer contact with the British Indian politics ; (3) Even if our federal scheme bears a number of drawbacks in its earlier phases, it is bound to be changed and improved by successive judicial interpretations. That federation is the only way under existing Indian circumstances is clear from the entire cultural background of Indian history—from the unique interlocking of the forces of centralization and decentralization. Federation, in the words of Sir Maurice Gwyer, is a "system which on a large scale has been found in other parts of the world to be the most effective means of combining unity with diversity and of reconciling the claims of local sentiment with the need of a representative central organization strong enough to counteract particularist and centrifugal tendencies." There seems to be no particular reason why what has succeeded 'on a large scale' in other parts of the world will not be able to meet our needs of a similar nature. The inclusion of the Indian States in the federal scheme is also bound to bear good results in the long run. The barriers that separate British India from Indian States are artificial, and merely administrative. There are no parallel ideological or cultural divisions. It is true that the inclusion of Indian States in the federation will lead to some difficulties in the beginning, but it is bound to accelerate the pace of their political consciousness and ultimately convert the Indian States into a help, rather than a hindrance, of our political

development as a nation. As Sir Tej puts it in his Memorandum on the White Paper : "One result among others of the association of British India and Indian States in the field of common activity in the federal legislature will be to facilitate the passage of the Indian States from their present form of autocratic government to a constitutional form with the rights of their subjects defined, ascertained and safeguarded." This is another strong argument in favour of the introduction of a federal constitution for India. Finally, a federation is a living constitution. Whether we take up the American federal structure or the federal constitutions of Canada and Australia, we find that each federation has a tendency of its own, which controls its entire development, and the outlines of divisions of powers which appear to be rigid and hard at first sight always change and mould themselves under the stress of time and circumstances. The Indian federation is also bound to find out its own equilibrium by a process of experimentation.

India fulfils all the pre-requisite conditions of a federation. The territories of her different units are contiguous to each other. There is common historical background and a long tradition of cultural heritage. There are common economic interests. There is a craving for spiritual and national unity. There is also, at the same time, a keen desire to maintain the identity and independence of the various units. This desire is becoming more vocal in the Muslim majority provinces, but it is not altogether absent

in the other provinces also. India, therefore, is in an excellent condition to develop a federal constitution. In fact, it seems to be the only thing necessary for solving her communal problem on the one side and meeting the necessity of administrative devolution on the other. Of course, the Indian federation will have to evolve its own pattern. There are some radical differences between the conditions in India and elsewhere. In other countries the initiative for federation has always been taken by independent states which have been inspired by a desire to come together. In India, the process will have to be started in a reverse order. We have already got one united country with a highly centralised administration. This will have to be broken up and a number of self-governing autonomous units linked up to an effective centre will have to be created. Every country has to face and solve its own problems in its own way. So, if India has got a difficult and unique task before her, there is no reason for her to shirk it. She has to face it squarely and contribute her own solution to the constitutional heritage of the world.

### SWITZERLAND AND THE U. S. S. R.

Before making any effort to think of the shape and form of the Indian federal democracy let us try to understand how the problem is solved in certain other countries of the world. I propose to confine my study to a survey of conditions in Switzerland and U. S. S. R, which have a strong resemblance with those in India.

In Switzerland, there are characteristics which violate all nationalistic canons of demographic and cultural unity. The small population of the country is divided into three language groups, besides of course sections of the population speaking a number of dialects. These language-groups have got their own patterns of culture, and, what is more significant and serious is, that geographically they are quite sharply separated from each other by the cantonal boundaries. Ticino for example is almost exclusively an Italian speaking canton. Geneva, Vaud, Neuchatel, Valais, are almost exclusively French; others are almost exclusively German. These people have probably as many cultural affiliations with their respective linguistic brethren in the neighbouring states of Germany, France and Italy as they have with each other. There are sharp religious differences also. Some cantons are overwhelmingly Protestant, others are overwhelmingly Catholic. Religious quarrels have been quite the order of the day in Switzerland's history, and religious differences are reflected in the organization of political parties even today. But inspite of all these differences, the Swiss have been able to develop a sense of national unity and patriotic devotion which is unparalleled in the world.

"Among the modern democracies which are true democracies," writes Lord Bryce, "the Hellenic Republic has the highest claim to be studied. It contains a greater variety of institutions based on democratic principles than any other country.....The most interesting lesson

that Switzerland teaches is how traditions and institutions, taken together, may develop in the average man, to an extent never reached before, the qualities which make a good citizen—shrewdness, moderation, common sense and a sense of duty to the community. It is because this has come to pass in Switzerland that democracy is there more truly democratic than in any other country in the world.”<sup>1</sup> “Despite..... religious and linguistic differences, “testifies another author, Arnold Zurcher,” and the internal discord which they have sometimes occasioned, Swiss legal and moral unity has grown firmer with each passing generation. Today there is no people in Europe among whom a sense of national unity and of patriotic devotion is more firmly fixed than among the Swiss. In a world grown somewhat weary of the too frequent reiteration of the principle of political ‘self-determination’ for races and linguistic groups, the Swiss offer a splendid example of how statehood and national patriotism can be fostered in utter defiance of such a principle.”<sup>2</sup>

What made it possible? It was certainly the federal constitution of the country. Let us try to have some idea of the division of authority in Switzerland. The essential powers are placed in the hands of the central government. It controls mainly, foreign relations and questions of peace and war. Besides these a number of problems, economic and commercial, which affect the entire country, such as

1. *Modern Democracies*, Vol I, p. 327.
2. *Governments of Continental Europe* p. 983.

currency, communications, commerce, weights and measures, conservation of natural resources, etc. are also controlled by the Centre. It is also true that federal authority has been gradually expanding. Federal ownership has been expanded to the nation's telephonic and wireless communications, and to the railways. Many new sources of federal taxation have been created. But the cantons have been able to maintain their sovereignty perfectly intact. There are a number of essential prerogations of government such as the maintenance of law and order, construction of public works and highways, control of elections and local government etc. which are exclusively controlled by the cantonal governments. The cantons also play an important role in affairs which predominantly are the concern of the central government. For example, although the federal government makes laws, the cantonal courts execute them. The cantons like-wise enforce federal military regulations and raise and equip contingents for the federal army. The cantons also play an important part in the amending of the constitution. Due to this perfect synthesis between the strength of the central government and the autonomy of federating units, achieved by means of a federal constitution, Switzerland has been able to occupy such a glorious place in the countries of the world.

It may be pointed out that Switzerland is a small country whose methods can hardly be a proper guidance for a vast country like India. The example of Russia, therefore, may be more

relevant. The problem of minorities and the desire for autonomy on the part of the different provinces is perhaps much more complex in Russia than in India. Russia has something like 185 different nationalities, speaking 147 different languages and dialects. But there also all these nations and nationalities, races and religions, castes and communities have been welded together into one by a federal constitution. The very fact that Russia has given such a brilliant account of herself in the present war gives a final burial to the argument that a federal constitution is not conducive to national strength. In Russia the units possess their own constitution, legislation and executive organs, courts and budgets. The boundaries of a republic cannot be changed without its consent. Freedom to secede is expressly conferred. There is perfect autonomy given to the various enclaves of political organisation, the constituent republics, the autonomous republics, the autonomous provinces, and even to the national districts. But at the same time the federal government also has got all those powers which are necessary for maintaining the strength of the country. It controls foreign affairs, war and peace, army and navy, foreign trade, transportation, posts and telegraphs, currency, banking, justice, citizenship etc. and is also empowered to establish fundamental principles for land use, exploitation of natural resources, labour, education and public health and in general to prescribe and carry out national economic plans. It is again through this harmonization of local



autonomy with a strong central government that Russia has been able to achieve her present position in the world.

## PROPOSED DIVISION OF POWERS

The establishment of a federal constitution alone will not solve all the problems of Indian Democracy. Much will depend on the actual division of powers in the federal constitution. One of the essentials of federalism is that it aims at a clear-cut division of powers between the central government and the federating units. But, however elaborate the division, there are always some rights and powers which cannot be clearly delegated to either. These uncertain and undefined powers, known as the residuary powers, are in certain countries handed over to the centre and in others vested in the federating units. The general tendency of modern federalism, however, is in the direction of leaving all such powers with the latter. The examples of the U.S.A., Australia, Switzerland and many other federal countries confirm the above statement. The one argument that is usually brought forward in our country against such an arrangement is that whereas in each of the countries mentioned above, the federal constitution was born out of a large number of small independent states merging together, in our country, there was one national government in existence long before these provincial units were created. It is, therefore, suggested by several leading authorities that, in our country,

the residuary power should, in its entirety, be vested in the central government.

Canada provides us with an example of a federal country where such an arrangement prevails. But those who bring in the analogy of Canada forget two things—firstly, that Canada is an exception and does not come under the general discipline of federal constitutions, and, secondly, that though Canada appears to go a different way, so far as the theory of the constitution is concerned, in actual practice there is hardly any difference between conditions there and elsewhere. In the U.S.A. and other countries, though the constitution places the residuary power with the units, the courts, by their judicial interpretations, have constantly strengthened the hands of the Central Government. In Canada, on the other hand, in spite of this power being with the centre, the courts have gone a long way towards strengthening the units. If we adopt the “doctrine of implied powers” (as enunciated by Chief Justice Marshall of the U.S.A.) the scope of residuary power is likely to be reduced still further. “The sound construction of the constitution,” it was laid down by Chief Justice Marshall, “must allow to the national legislature that discretion with respect to the means by which the powers it confers are to be carried into execution which will enable that body to perform the high duties assigned to it in a manner most beneficial to the people.” “Let the end be legitimate,” he said further, “Let it be within the scope of the constitution, and all

means which are appropriate. which are plainly adopted to that end, and which are not prohibited but are consistent with the letter and the spirit of the constitution. are constitutional." Some of the most important functions which the federal government performs today in the U.S.A., have their basis in "implied" power. I believe that, with defence and external affairs under the exclusive control of the centre, and the federal court vested with the power of giving judgment on the application of the doctrine of "implied powers," we should unhesitatingly lay it down that the residuary powers shall be vested in the federating units. Our provincial units themselves are such big political entities, each with its own cultural distinctiveness and long historical traditions, and the desire for 'self determination' is so strong in some of them, that it would be difficult to deprive them of what appears at the very face of it a part of their natural rights.

One important fact, however, has to be made absolutely clear, even at the cost of some repetition. All over the world, the tendency of federalism is towards strengthening the centre. The establishment of a federal constitution in India too is bound to accelerate the forces of centralization in this country. We have to face this fact squarely. The main difference between a federal and an unitary government is not that the one is based on decentralization and the other on centralization. A federal government, without discouraging the healthy tendencies of decentralization,

sometimes by even encouraging them, safeguards all those elements which are essential for a strong centralized government. The unitary government, on the other hand, rides roughshod over all forces of decentralization, irrespective of the fact whether they are good, bad or indifferent—and even at the risk of goading these forces to rise in revolt against it and throw its entire existence into peril. A federal government is, therefore, an experiment in practical politics. It does not believe in giving a needless offence to forces of disintegration. The opponents of a federal constitution of India are fully aware of this tendency of federalism, and so we find the advocates of Pakistan condemning it in strong terms and the sponsors of the various regional theories trying to by-pass it. Both these groups rigorously attack the very conception of a strong centre and are naturally opposed to the establishment of a federal constitution. But those of us who believe in putting India in the forefront of world politics cannot afford to be entangled in this wordy warfare. We cannot swallow gullibly the vague and elusive theories of national or cultural self-determination or sovereignty. We have to analyse them rationally, and relate them, on the one hand, to the needs and requirements of the entire country and, on the other, to the interests and the well-being of the federating units. I, therefore, do not hesitate to admit that the Indian federation, as I envisage it, as will not be able to satisfy the sentimental urges of certain reactionary ele-

ments of our political life.

If we have to choose between a federal constitution and a confederacy, our choice should unhesitatingly go to the former. The idea of a confederacy, where each political unit thinks primarily in terms of its own national sovereignty, has become an incongruity in the world of today. Even Prof. Coupland and the other advocates of the regional theory have taken pains to announce that what they want is something better than a confederacy, though a study of their proposals makes us convinced that what they want is something much worse. Pakistan envisages the existence of two federations in a country which geographical position, economic resources, needs of defence and cultural traditions have gone to shape into an indivisible unit. Both these proposals tend to weaken the national strength, which a federal constitution alone promises to maintain. If we look into history, we can easily find innumerable instances to corroborate the fact that only those confederacies have been able to maintain their existence, which have moved either under external pressure, or due to internal needs, in the federal direction. All the other confederacies have inevitably broken up into small independent units. In the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Switzerland, the U.S.S.R., the federation has always grown along these lines, and, in all these countries, the essential powers of the Central Government have always tended to grow.

#### DEFENCE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

So far as the actual division of powers is

concerned, I think we can safely start on the principle that with the exception of the most essential powers, all powers have to be exercised by the autonomous units. We can wholeheartedly agree with the principle laid down by the Sapru Committee that the powers and functions assigned to the Centre should be as small in number as possible. I would even suggest that the list given by the Sapru Committee might be further cut down. But how to define the word 'essential' in the principle laid down above? I think that so far as this is concerned, we can unequivocally lay down the hypothesis that the fundamental unity of India has to remain unshaken. This would mean that India must present herself as an undivided unit before the rest of the world. This would definitely involve the need of maintaining our defence system and our army for the whole country. In other words, the Defence and the External Affairs of the country have got to be vested in the Central Government.

There can be no compromise on this point. The recent trend of events in the Pacific seems to be adding to India's responsibilities. If the future world war is to be fought in the Pacific, as many people think, it will become all the more necessary for India to keep her army in top strength. The transfer of defence to the provincial governments, under these circumstances, would be tantamount to national suicide. Even if the provinces are permitted to maintain their armies, it will be the responsibility of the Centre to see that they do not get embroiled in

new autonomous provinces can be brought into existence within these constituent republics, without the express permission of the federal government. Both the problems of national defence and the maintenance of internal peace depend on the same government.

But if we go deep into the matter, we can easily see that in spite of the Centre controlling the departments both of defence and external affairs, there is a good deal of scope for the autonomous units to play their part. It will be difficult to corroborate this by quoting exact chapter and verse, since the powers of the units are seldom specifically laid down in a federal constitution, the assumption being that all powers, except those explicitly handed over to the federal government, continue to be exercised by the federating units. The constitution of the U.S.A. may not be a very great help in the matter, since the forces of centralisation are rather unusually strong there. But we can take a leaf from the constitution of Switzerland and several other countries. In Switzerland, though the federal government controls and makes laws for the army, these laws are enforced by the Cantons, which also raise and equip contingents for the federal army. Similarly, the foreign policy is controlled by the federal government, but the Cantons are permitted, upto a limit and with the approval of the federal government, to enter into agreements with the foreign countries. Another remarkable difference between the constitutions of the U. S. A. and Switzerland is that whereas

in the U. S. A. the responsibility for the maintenance of internal law and order lies with the Central Government, which can interfere, in case of an outbreak of lawlessness and anarchy, in the affairs of the States, at the latter's request and sometimes even without it, in Switzerland, the responsibility for maintaining internal law and order belongs exclusively to the Cantonal governments.

In the U. S. S. R., the constitutional changes of February 1944 propose to hand over very great rights, in matters of defence and external affairs, to the various republican governments. "The significance of the present reform," said Molotov, while initiating the proposals in the Council of Peoples' Commissars, "is quite clear. It implies that the Union Republics will acquire a wider field of activity, which has become possible as a result of their political, economic and cultural growth, in other words, as a result of their national development. One cannot but regard this as a new important step towards the practical solution of the national question in our multi-national Soviet State.....But this reform became possible not simply as a result of the consolidation of our Republics ; it became possible as a result of the consolidation we have achieved in our All-Union State as a whole."<sup>1</sup> With this reform, the U.S.S.R. has definitely entered a new phase of her progress. In our country also, with the growth of national strength and self-confidence, it will be possible to make experiments in the direction of decentralizing of depart-

1. *New Powers of the Soviet Republics*, p. 2.



ments of defence and external affairs. In matters of foreign policy, the attitude of the provinces is bound to carry a good deal of weight from the very beginning. But in matters of defence, this healthy decentralization will be possible only after sometime, as it has become possible in Russia today. In Russia, let it be noted, there is more of it on paper than in fact. In India also, at least for some time to come, the provinces will have very little say in the matters of control over army and the nation's foreign policy. But gradually, as things settle down, they are bound to play an increasingly important role.

### CONTROL OVER ECONOMIC PLANNING

The problem of an economic reconstruction of the country is closely linked up with that of defence and external affairs. As pointed out earlier, no country can hope to obtain a position in world politics today unless it has got tremendous economic resources, and a gigantic programme for exploiting them to the fullest extent. Our problem, however, is not merely that of raising ourselves to the pinnacle of prestige and power in world affairs. We shall first have to fight against the stark naked poverty of our people. "A hundred and fifty years and more of foreign rule," to quote the recent election manifesto issued by the Congress, "have arrested the growth of the country and produced numerous vital problems that demand immediate solution. Intensive exploitation of the country and the people during this period has reduced the masses

to the depths of misery and starvation." Under these circumstances, the most vital and urgent of India's problems will be how to remove the curse of poverty and raise the standard of the masses. Industry and agriculture, social services and public utilities shall, therefore, have to be encouraged, modernized and rapidly extended, in order to add to the wealth of the country and give it the capacity for self-growth, without dependence on others. These gigantic problems can be successfully tackled only by large-scale planning.

The task of economic planning is almost everywhere left in the hands of the Central Government. The provincial governments, even if they are able to develop their economic resources to a certain extent by their own exertion, have to depend, for their industrial expansion and commercial growth, for their agricultural conditions and means of communication, to a much larger extent on their neighbouring and, sometimes, distant provinces. They will also need, for many things, such limitless resources which they will not find it easy or even possible to marshall with their limited means. This clearly points towards the inevitability of leaving all large-scale planning, in the hands of the Central Government. Let us, once again, look at the practice followed in other countries. In the U. S. S. R. the entire work of economic planning is generally entrusted to a State Planning Commission, the members of which are appointed by the Council of People's Commissars and have to work under the close supervision of the Communist Party. The main

work before this body, popularly known as the Gosplan, is to co-ordinate the vast mass of factual information which reaches it from every corner of the country, and to prepare a unified plan according to the general directions issued by the Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissars. The responsibility of carrying out these suggestions lies on the federal government which has been authorised by the constitution to interfere as much in the internal administration of the constituent republics as would be necessary in the interest of a successful execution of those schemes. All the three Five-Year Plans of Russia have developed along these lines. It is due mainly to these plans that private ownership of the means of production has disappeared in Russia, and the collectivization of farming is an accomplished fact. The industrialization of the country has taken rapid strides, while the volume of industrial production has increased many fold. In 1937, according to Molotov, 80 percent of industrial production in Russia came from enterprises established under the first and the second Five-Year Plans. Ninety per cent of all the tractors which were employed in Soviet agriculture at this time were of domestic manufacture while only a few years before none were made in Russia. It is claimed that the volume of production in Russia increased between 1929 and 1937, by as much as 300 or 400 per cent. It is true that even today, there are many capitalist countries—the U.S.A. and Great Britain in particular—which are far ahead of Russia in the matter of industrial production, but while it took

several centuries for these countries to reach their present position, in Russia, the whole thing has been achieved in a record time. There can hardly be any doubt about the fact that Russia could not have obtained such a colossal success if the entire work of economic planning had not been placed under the exclusive control of her central government.

Our country too has vast economic resources which can yield excellent fruits only if they are properly handled. We have perhaps the most exclusive potential area for free trading in the world in which, though there have been poverty and helplessness, there has been peace and order too for several centuries. The system of communication—roads and railways, post and telegraph—is fairly well developed. There is no dearth of natural resources—coal and iron ore are often found juxtaposed together along with other minerals. We have, thus, before us a wide and easy road to industrialization. We cannot also offset the tendencies which have been growing for the last fifty years in our country but which were accelerated during the First World War and have now become almost irresistible during the second. The industrialization of the country has become an inevitable factor today. We are no longer in a position to debate over its merits and demerits. The main problem before us is how to control this tendency and relate it on the one side to an international economy and, on the other, to our own village economy. It will not be an easy task. Industrialization has always involved a good deal of

political centralization, but in our country, it is not a question of industrialization only. We have undoubtedly to increase our industrial production, which is an inevitable step in the direction of removing our poverty, but if we are not able, at the same time, to improve our agricultural standards, this will be a mere lopsided growth. The inter-war years of world-wide confusion have made it fully clear that the question of *distribution* cannot be divorced from the question of *production*. Ninety per cent of India's population lives in villages and is directly or indirectly, dependent on agriculture. If the economic conditions of this vast majority of Indian people are not improved we shall not be able to make any arrangements for the consumption of our industrial production. Due to the drive at economic sufficiency, national or regional, which is affecting almost every part of the world, it is becoming more and more necessary that we should be able to create wider markets for our national productions within the bounds of our country itself. In short, we have to increase the individual capacity for production. Poverty is to a very great extent linked up with low productivity per head in agriculture. As Colin Clark has pointed out in one of his recent books,<sup>1</sup> in New Zealand 6.4 per cent of the total labour-force would be sufficient to secure an optimum diet to the whole population, whereas the Russian population would only get an optimum diet if 200 per cent of the working population were.

1. Colin Clark : *The conditions of Economic Progress*.

employed in agriculture. In our country too, the productivity per head has to be increased manifold. It is only then that industrialization will succeed in India. This task of linking up industrialization with agricultural reforms can be undertaken only by a strong Central Government.

The execution of that part of economic reconstruction which will be concerned with the internal development of a province might be left completely in the hands of the provincial government. All that will be necessary is to ensure that it is properly linked up with the national economy. There are some problems which cannot be decided by provincial government alone, nor do they come within the direct reach of the central government either. The harnessing and proper utilization of the hydro-electric energy may be mentioned in this connection. So far as this is concerned, I would prefer it to be placed under some kind of inter-provincial control, under the supervision of the Centre, rather than that some extraordinary 'regional' administration is brought into existence for the purpose. The essential point is that there must be a spirit of co-operation between the Centre and the Provinces. Such a spirit can be tried and fostered only in a federal polity.

#### OTHER POWERS OF THE FEDERAL CENTRE

The questions of Currency and Exchange are closely linked up with those of economic reconstruction. It is necessary that there must be an uniform policy, in matters of currency and exchange, throughout the country. The dangerous consequences of diversity in these spheres are writ large over the European conditions of today. The existence of a common currency will help in an all-round growth of the economic life of all the provinces as well as of the entire country. Similarly, the

existence of an uniform rate of exchange between the Indian and the foreign currency will be conducive towards better trade relations with the world. If, on the other hand, each province is allowed to have its own currency, or if the rates of exchange differ from one province to another, it will hamper the growth of both our internal and international trade. It might lead to an accumulation of large stocks of foreign goods in certain provinces, which would merely breed a spirit of frantic competition between various provinces to raise their tariff barriers. One cannot, indeed, think of a better way of killing our national trade and rendering impossible our national prosperity. Unless we are keen to invite this state of anarchy, we have no alternative but to place the control both of currency and exchange with our Central Government,

Internally, economic planning is closely connected with *Transport and Communication* on the one side and *Industry and Commerce* on the other. Dr. Beni Prasad has placed them both under the Central control. There are strong arguments in favour of this suggestion. Through her long periods of history, India has been able to evolve a well-connected and co-ordinated system of roads, railways, post and telegraph, and telephone. It may not be wise to break up that unity. It is, therefore, suggested by a section of writers that *transport and communication* must be planned as a *whole* by an all-India authority, and that the *trunk* railways and roads must all be



ministered by it. It is further pointed out that there is an international aspect of the problem also, which may assume even greater importance in the near future. India may be joined by road, perhaps by rail also, to Burma, China, Afghanistan and Iran. She is already a link and a step in a world-wide system of aviation. An extension of ship-building and maritime activities is also more than probable. All these would necessitate the making of agreements with foreign countries in regard to roads, shipping and air transport, and participating in conferences on international co-ordination of transport and communications. One can hardly dispute the fact that this aspect of the matter can be managed with dignity, efficiency and common advantage, not by the autonomous units separately, but by an all-India administrations. Similarly, in the matter of industry and commerce, arrangements on an all-India scale will be absolutely necessary for the enforcement of business contract and may become even more necessary when the wheels of commerce and industry revolve with greater velocity in the future. Besides, we have also to keep in mind the question of overseas commerce. Above all, we have not to forget that, from the economic point of view, India is one indivisible unit, and any division of economic authority could, therefore, necessarily involve some kind of loss to the country.

These are strong arguments and, from the point of view of theory, perfect. But we have to look at things from the practical point of

view too. The establishment of a federal constitution in the country itself involves a tacit acceptance on our part of the fact that our provinces have now developed a certain amount of keenness for self-determination and have also become politically so mature as to warrant a certain amount of decentralization. Under these circumstances, we cannot ignore the issue of provincial initiative and control. We have, in fact, to do our best to foster and stimulate it. All that we have to ensure is that we do not allow any misunderstandings to grow between the Centre and the provinces. I would, therefore, like to suggest that in these matters the provinces may be trusted with a great deal of power. Of course, the wider aspect of economic reconstruction, policies regarding currency and exchange and the external aspect of trade and commerce which would link up our country with foreign lands, will all have to be placed under the exclusive control of the Central Government, but it may be advisable to leave the internal aspect of the last mentioned field of government authority to the control of the provincial governments. Our roads and railway systems, for example, generally cover two or three provinces each. They can be placed under inter-provincial control. There are some feeder-roads and railway lines, which do not extend even beyond a single province. Any attempt on the part of the Centre to interfere in their administration will be definitely unwelcome. In Europe most of the railway

companies are privately-owned and they can work quite efficiently in two or three countries. There is no reason why a similar system should not succeed in India. Similarly, in the matter of industry and commerce, it has got to be laid down that there shall be no custom barriers between one province and another, but the actual control over the provincial commerce can be exercised by the provincial government itself. Of course, in all these matters we cannot ignore the very necessary principle that in case of emergency there should be a provision for all these departments to be controlled by the Central Government.

### CONCURRENT JURISDICTION

Then, there are a number of subjects on which there can be concurrent jurisdiction. The above discussion is likely to give some idea to the reader as to how even in matters of economic reconstruction, which are generally exclusively controlled by the central authority there is scope for some kind of sharing of power with the provinces. Leaving aside the questions of currency and exchange, which have got to be placed under the control of the Centre, in the administration of almost all other economic matters the central and the provincial governments can always find out ways and means of sharing authority. A greater part of the means of communication, and many aspects of industry, can be handed over to the provincial control. In so many other matters, whereas the responsibility of law-making may be vested in

the Centre, the authority to carry it out may be handed over to the provincial governments. Such legislative centralization and administrative decentralization is particularly suited to questions of marriage, divorce etc. Copyright, census and survey, customs, social insurance, factory codes and other similar questions also may be left to concurrent jurisdiction. The tracing of fugitives and unravelling of widespread conspiracies would also require similar co-operation between the Centre and the provinces. These are all problems which can neither be exclusively handled by the Central Government, nor can they be successfully resolved by the provincial governments.

### EXCLUSIVE PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION

All the remaining departments of administration will be under the exclusive control of the provinces, which also will be the repositories of all residuary powers. It is not necessary to enter into a detailed discussion of these powers, since in a good federation all those powers which are not specifically handed over to the Central Government are automatically exercised by the units. The main task of a federal constitution is to delimit the bounds of the central government. If we once more look at the above analysis we shall find that there are only five departments which have been proposed to be placed under the exclusive or partial jurisdiction of the federal government. They are foreign affairs, defence, the principal means of transport, customs for the most part, and currency and ex-

change. There are a few more departments in which the federal government will have some rights of making laws etc. or of supervision. With the exception of these departments, which shall be specifically mentioned by the constitution, all other departments will be fully under the control of the autonomous units.

The provincial government will have full control over the religious, cultural and civil rights of their citizens—though the safeguarding of the minority rights will be a part of the constitution. They will control education, from the primary stage to the highest university courses and all matters connected with education—literature, museums, language and literature, theatres, cinemas, musical academies etc. The legislation as well as the administration of all these subjects will be in the hands of the provincial governments. Agriculture and various other problems connected with agriculture also fall directly within the provincial jurisdiction. Along with agriculture, the provincial government will control the land tax, forests, co-operative societies, and innumerable local taxes. Similarly, local self-government, all institutions connected with the general health of the people, hospitals and the nursing homes etc., public buildings, local roads and railway lines, gas, water works and electricity etc, also will be exclusively controlled by the provinces. But possibly the greatest expression of true autonomy of the provincial governments will be their responsibility for law and order. The departments of law and order will be completely under their control. They will also control irrigation,

rivers, etc. The successful working of some of these, and similar departments, will undoubtedly necessitate a certain amount of inter-provincial co-operation, but this ought to have no adverse effect on provincial autonomy. In Europe, a river sometimes passes through four or five countries, and is jointly controlled by them all, but this never involves the loss of national sovereignty on the part of any of them. If we merely look at the above list of departments, which will all be under the exclusive control of the provincial governments, we can easily see that it includes departments which touch some of the most important aspects of human life and innumerable branches of administration which affect the daily life of every citizen, and all those rights about which the religious and cultural minorities are generally sensitive.

If such a scheme is adopted, I am perfectly sure, the Muslim fears of being dominated by the majority can, to a very great extent, be set at rest, and, at the same time, the desire which is found not only in the Muslim majority provinces but in almost all the provinces to be the captains of their souls and the masters of their destiny, can be satisfied. It will also allow the Central Government to control the important affairs whenever there is an emergency in the country. It has, of course, to be kept in mind that no division of powers and no amount of autonomy granted to the provinces can be satisfactory unless there is the will to work it in a spirit of compromise. Another point to be kept in mind is that this does not involve either a weak

centre or satellite provinces. There is generally an impression that we have to choose between a weak centre and satellite provinces. Now, the beauty of a federal solution is that it does not weaken either the Centre or the provinces. It divides authority between the Centre and the units, and makes each sovereign and strong in its own allotted spheres. In those matters where the exclusive control will lie with the Centre, the Central Government will be able to act strongly. Similarly, with regard to those departments which will be under the exclusive control of the provincial units, they will be able to exercise supreme power. It is, therefore, not a question of making the Centre or the provinces imbecile. We can retain the strength of both, of course, in different spheres of action. The fear that a federal constitution weakens the national strength has been proved to be absolutely baseless by the recent war: it is not insignificant that the two countries which have emerged triumphant out of this war are both federal countries.

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# Directions for Constitutional Adjustment

### THE STARTING-POINT

Having established the appropriateness of a federal constitution to the existing Indian circumstances, and having discussed the basic principles of the proposed Indian federation, we have now to decide what shall be the starting point for our future constitutional development. There are four definite schemes before us. Many people think that, however mistaken our earlier constitutional experiments might have been, the Act of 1935 chalks out before us a very clear and definite programme of constitutional progress and that we should, clearing the deadlock of the intervening years, once more set ourselves on the same path. We cannot, however, afford to forget that the British Government, which had the ultimate credit or discredit of evolving the scheme embodied in the Act of 1935, has itself given it up. The alternative scheme which they have now placed before us was initiated in the August Offer of 1940, its outlines laid bare in the Cripps Proposals of March 1942, and some of its shortcomings rectified in the Wavell Plan of June 1945. The third scheme is that which the Congress is



propounding for a number of years. The Congress demands that the formulation of our future constitution should be the work of a Constituent Assembly, representing the entire adult population of the country. There is a fourth scheme also, which was for the first time propounded by the Muslim League in March 1940. It asks for a division of the country into two parts and lays down that each part shall have the right to frame its own constitution. This is popularly known as the Pakistan Scheme. The whole scheme has been discussed in the earlier chapters, and its unsuitability to the existing Indian and international circumstances fully analysed.

Much is said in favour of the Act of 1935. It is pointed out that it was the outcome of years of deliberation, discussion and debate, and that it was based on the principles of federalism. Whatever may be said about the Central part of the Act, it claimed to have brought into existence democratic governments in the provincial sphere and, it is contended, if the federal part of the scheme had also been brought into existence, it might have led to a similar triumph of democratic forces at the Centre too. The policy adopted by the provincial governors, of not carrying their reserved powers and special responsibilities too far, had created a healthy precedent. It could be hoped that such intervention would be eliminated from the Central field of administration too. Everything appeared to be going on smoothly till the outbreak of war. During the period immediately preced-

ing the war, whenever there was a constitutional crisis, it could be averted due to the presence of goodwill on both sides. If the war had not come in between and the Congress had not committed the mistake of throwing over the provincial governments, it is argued, this cordiality of relations between the Indians and the British would have got further consolidated and, without bitterness or conflict, India would have found a place of honour in the British Commonwealth of Nations. "Those who had carefully studied the Indian situation", writes Sir George Schuster, "and the provisions of the Act felt that, however large the safeguards and reservations on complete freedom might loom on paper. Indian ministers, if they took advantage of the wide powers which were given to them, would establish themselves in so strong a position that restraints could never effectively be imposed against any course which was in the interests of India and which commanded the genuine support of Indian opinion. Such people saw in the first workings of the provincial governments great signs for encouragement, and were prepared to let these outweigh in their judgment certain danger signals which also appeared. But they have been discouraged and, indeed, entirely baffled by the recent conduct of the Congress leaders".<sup>1</sup>

Indian nationalism, on the other hand, opposed the Act of 1935 from the very beginning, and has now completely rejected it. What was unacceptable ten years back has become

1. *India and Democracy*, 1941, pp. 339-40.

reprehensible before the enlightened popular forces of today. The worst feature of the Act of 1935 was that it laid a much greater emphasis on restrictions than on the transfer of power. As things stood, much depended on the fact whether the British Government was willing to work it in a liberal spirit—and with the growth of conservative forces in England this liberality of spirit was gradually ebbing out. The greatest drawback of the Act of 1935, thus, was that its working depended entirely on the mood of the British Government. In 1937, when it wanted to establish provincial governments in India, such governments could spring to life. For two years, it played with democratic forces in India, but towards the end of 1939, when it found them becoming too strong, the whole structure came toppling down, like a house of cards! Whatever rights might have been given to the Indian people under the Act of 1935, the British government had not parted with an ounce of sovereignty. If it had not been so, popular forces could not have been so ruthlessly trampled over in 1939. If the British Government was convinced that the Congress ministries had lost the confidence of the people, they ought to have replaced them by ministers whom they considered to be more representative rather than placing the whole constitution in the hands of the Governor. Let it be reaffirmed, in this connection, that whatever might be the nature of our constitution, it may be parliamentary or presidential, dominion status or complete independence, we want a complete

and unconditional transfer of sovereign rights from the British Government to the Indian people. There can be no talk or negotiations in this matter. Judged by this test the Act of 1935 deserves nothing but condemnation. It had no scheme, nor even any intention, to make a transfer of power it was on the other hand, a desperate effort to cling to the last vestiges of power.

The Act of 1935 also failed to tackle our internal problems. It did not offer any solution for our communal difficulties. On the other hand, while maintaining intact all the causes of communal bitterness it tried to encourage a spirit of narrow provincialism and thus to cut up Indian nationalism vertically as well as horizontally. The principle of separate electorates had been carefully retained. By converting Punjab and Bengal into Muslim majority provinces, through the Macdonald Award, and by facilitating the establishment of Muslim governments in Sind and N. W. F. P., an attempt was made to array Muslim provinces as against Hindu provinces: it was an unique method of interlinking forces of provincialism and communalism. Not being based on the true principles of federalism, the Act had also not vested the provincial governments with any real power, which might have been of some help in communal adjustment. The provinces had not been recognized as independent units. There was not much scope for provincial self-determination. The provinces, thus, had every reason to fear the domination of the Centre, which

its own turn, was too decrepit to stand on its own legs, and leaned completely on the British Government. In fact, the Act of 1935 did not aim at the establishment of a federal constitution in the country. It was designed merely to carry on an unitary system of government which was now clothed, in order that its teeth and claws may not be visible, in the attractive garb of federalism. The popular forces were kept in strick abeyance and in order further to throttle them, arrangements had been made for a large-scale back-door invasion by the Indian princely order. The Indian States had been so linked up with British India that it not only provided the Indian princes with an unstinted maintenance of their authoritarianism but gave a full scope to the British Government also to continue its dictatorship. There was, in brief, more than sufficient provision for the reactionary influence of the princes to throw its full weight on the federal government, but the progressive ideas of the latter could have absolutely no influence on the Indian princes and their mediaval regimes. The Act of 1935 had, thus, neither found a satisfactory solution of the problem of relationship between India and Britain nor was it able to tackle the inter-Indian issues. It was, therefore, natural, that the Indian public opinion rejected the whole scheme, log, stock and barrel.

#### SEARCH FOR AN INTERIM SOLUTION

Political events moved in a strange way between 1937 and 1939. The Congress had accepted to work provincial autonomy for

what it was worth but was so much dissatisfied with the federal part of the Act that, in words of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, it was not prepared to touch it even with a pair of tongs. The Government, on the other hand, seemed anxious to give it a trial. But in the coming two years the entire picture changed. The experience of provincial autonomy had led the Congress to believe that, given the same amount of goodwill on the part of the British, it might be able to make something out of the federal scheme. The Congress was now beginning to place some confidence in British integrity. It hoped that the Governor-General also would use his special powers and responsibilities as sparingly as the provincial Governors had done. There was a ray of hope from another quarter also. Along with the growth of political consciousness in the British Indian provinces, the people of the Indian States were becoming more and more aware of their civil and political rights, and they had now begun to demand constitutional governments in their territories. If the movement became strong, as it was expected to be, the Congress could hope that it would have a salutary effect at the states representation in the federal bodies. If the states representatives in these federal bodies could only be chosen by people instead of by the autocratic rulers, the whole spirit of the constitution would have changed, and one of the strongest objections of the Congress would have vanished into thin air. Under these circumstances, we find that the Congress

opposition to the Act of 1935 was gradually losing force. But, on the other hand, the keenness of the Indian Princes and of the British Government to support it was also fast disappearing. The Indian Princes had accepted the principle of federalism under the impression that it would give them a chance, without compelling them to sacrifice an iota of their autocracy, to influence all-India politics. But as they became more and more acquainted with the essentials of federation and began to realize that the federal government, and the forces of democracy at its back, were bound, sooner or later, to encroach upon their sovereign rights, they grew sceptic, and indifferent, and cold towards the idea.<sup>1</sup> The acceptance of a federal constitution of India by the British government was conditional on its acceptance by the princes. The adhesion of a majority of Indian princes was made an indispensable condition of its inauguration. In the absence of such an assurance, the British government had every fear that power would pass into progressive hands. By the beginning of 1939, the princely attitude had become clear. The British Government was now keen to shake off the entire scheme. The outbreak of the war, in September 1939, gave them an excellent pretext to do so.

The renunciation by the Congress of the provincial government and the burial of the

1. For a detailed study of the change in the point of view of the Indian Princes see :

Dr. Raghubir Singh : *Indian States and the New Regime*.

Act of 1935 by the British Government itself brought into relief two different aspects of our constitutional problem. Firstly, there was the need to devise some interim solution for ending the existing political impasse, and secondly, there was the problem of formulating a permanent constitution of the country which might be able to tackle its fundamental problems. An interim solution would have sufficed for the duration of the war, but in order partly to arrange the growing political demands of the country and partly to cover up the hollowness of the proposed interim scheme, hopes were, time and again, raised in our minds regarding the future. At the outbreak of the war, the Viceroy entered into a series of talks with the prominent leaders of the country. In October 1939, he suggested, as an interim measure, the establishment of a consultative group, representative of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes. The Governor-General himself was to preside over the group which was to be summoned at his invitation, and to have as its object 'the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war and with questions relating to war activities'. When this phantom offer failed to create any impression of the Indian nationalism, the Viceroy, in his Orient Club speech at Bombay, January 1940, drew up a more attractive picture about the future. He made it clear that Dominion Status was the goal of British policy in India 'to be attained with the minimum delay after the conclusion of the war'. It



time officially laid down that Dominion Status of the Statute of Westminster variety was the British Government's objective for India. The Act of 1935 was not completely thrown into the scrap-heap. It was said that they would be 'ready to consider the re-opening of the scheme of the Act of 1935 as soon as practicable after the war with the aid of Indian opinion'. So far as the immediate arrangements were concerned, the Viceroy now kindly agreed, instead of creating a loose consultative group, depending completely on his whims and fancies and initiative, to extend his Executive Council so as to include a small number of political leaders 'subject to such local adjustments between the leaders of the great communities as may be necessary to ensure harmonious working'. The question of conceding to India the right of self-determination had not been mentioned anywhere so far. In August 1940, the Viceroy dropped this condition of 'local adjustments' and announced the expansion of his Executive Council. The August announcement contained two significant points. The first was related to minority communities. They were given an assurance that no constitutional change would ever be made in future unless their approval was first obtained. The second point related to the machinery for building the frame-work of the future constitution. It was laid down that it would be primarily the responsibility of Indians themselves and would originate from Indian conceptions of the social, economic and political structure of Indian life—again, 'subject

to the due fulfilment of the obligations which Great Britain's long connection with India has imposed upon her, and for which His Majesty's Government cannot divest themselves of responsibility'.

The August Offer of 1940 was insulting, so far as suggestions for the present were concerned, and vague and dangerous in its implications regarding the future. Sir Stafford Cripps was the first man to place some definite scheme for the future constitution of the country :

1. He envisaged the creation of a new Indian Union, which would constitute a dominion associated with the Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but 'equal to them in every respect' and 'in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs'.
- 2 The constitution of this Indian Union was to be formed not by the British Parliament, but by an elected body.
3. *Provision was to be made for participation of Indian States in this constitution-making body.*
4. Any Province of British India that was not prepared to accept the new constitution was to be given the right to retain its existing constitutional position, and provision was to be made for its subsequent accession if it so decided.
- 5 A treaty was to be negotiated and signed between His Majesty's Govt. and the constitution-making body. This treaty was to cover all necessary matter arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands.
6. The treaty was also to make provision *in accordance with undertakings given by His Majesty's Government*, for the protection of racial and religious minorities.
7. Provision was to be made for the holding of provincial elections at the end of hostilities, immedi-

- ately after which the entire membership of the lower houses of provincial legislatures was, as a single electoral college, to proceed to the election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body was to be in number about one-tenth of the number of electoral college.
8. If the leaders of the Indian opinion in the principal communities could agree, before the end of hostilities upon some other form of constituting this body—that could be adopted. But in the absence of such agreement, the above-mentioned method was to prevail.
  9. In this constitution-making body, Indian States were to be invited in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole *and with the same powers as British Indian members.*

The Cripps Proposals, so far as their implications regarding the future were concerned, might, with some verbal and some fundamental changes, have been acceptable to the country, but so far as the immediate present was concerned, they merely reaffirmed what the Viceroy and the Secretary of State had repeated *ad nauseum* since August 1940, and which Sir Stafford Cripps had himself condemned earlier. Indian nationalism was not prepared to forget the present in the illusions of the future.

Maintaining this scheme in fact for the future, the first step forward towards finding a satisfactory solution for the present was taken by Lord Wavell in June 1945. The Wavell Proposals reaffirmed once again that the objective of the British Government was to advance India along her goal of full self-government, but at the same

time made it clear that it had no intention of imposing a constitutional settlement on the country. The Viceroy announced his intention of forming a new Executive Council, which was to be more representative of organised political opinion. The new Executive Council was to represent the main communities, rather than the leading political parties, and was to consist of an equal proportion of Caste-Hindus and Muslims. If the leaders of the various communities had agreed to these proposals, they could have formed an executive council under the existing constitution. In that case, with the exception of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, it would have become an entirely Indian Council. The Commander-in-Chief could not have diverted himself of his responsibilities as war-minister, but the viceroy was willing to place the portfolios of external affairs, so long held by himself, in the hands of an Indian. The scheme also included the appointment of a British High Commissioner in India, as in the Dominions, and this officer was to be in charge of the safeguarding of Britain's trade interests in this country. The proposals suffered from two serious draw-backs. Firstly, they aimed to bring down the Caste-Hindus, whose number is above 43 p. c. of the total population, to the same level as the Muslims who are not more than 24 p. c. Secondly, the Viceroy had translated the proposal of parity between the Congress and the Muslim League, which had been the basis of the Bhulabhai-Liaquat Ali talks, into the communal language—and had thereby appeared to be

creating the impression that he thought the Congress to be representative of the Hindus alone, when the Viceroy, by his accepting Maulana Azad as representing the Congress, indirectly accepted the Congress claim to be a nationalist organization, the Congress also withdrew its active opposition to the principle of parity between the Caste-Hindus and the Muslims. But due to the claim forwarded by the League to be the sole representative of the Indian Muslims, and the repudiation of that claim by Malik Khizar Hayat Khan and other Muslim leaders, the Simla Conference was declared as unsuccessful. In the meantime, the last curtain had been dropped at the world-war, and the general consensus of opinion, here as well as in England, was that the time for interim solutions was past and that the work of framing a permanent constitution for India was now to be undertaken. It was under these circumstances that the decision to hold elections to the central and the provincial legislatures was made, and it is thought that as soon as the results of these elections are known, the task of framing a permanent constitution will be undertaken.

#### DEMAND FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The various proposals brought forward by the British Government during the last five or six years to devise an interim solution—for the political impasse or for a permanent constitutional settlement, touch their highest watermark, in the one case, in the Wavell proposals

and in the other, in the Cripps Offer. But they fall far below the Congress demand, the Congress was prepared to move a long way towards compromise in the matter of an interim solution. It would have been satisfied if the Central Government had been made amenable to some kind of popular control; and if a clear and unequivocal declaration had been made regarding India to full independence at the end of hostilities. Of course, it was not willing to be lured into mere consultative committees or shadow cabinets. As the war grew in intensity and grimness, the Congress showed an increasingly greater spirit of compromise. The Poona resolution of the Congress, in which it had offered to compromise even its creed of non-violence, was the boldest step in this direction. While reaffirming the Congress conviction that the acknowledgement by Great Britain of the complete independence of India was the only solution of the problems facing both India, and Britain, the Congress, through the Poona resolution, expressed its willingness to accept, for the present, a provisional National Government at the Centre, which could command the confidence of all the elected elements in the Central Legislature and secure the closest co-operation of the responsible governments in the Provinces. The Bardoli resolution of the Congress was another effort to break open the deadlock. But all these efforts were shipwrecked at the rock of British Government's intransigent attitude and a grim determination to hold on. But while the Congr-

willing, during war period, to keep in abeyance some of its essential demands, it is not likely to enter into any compromise regarding them so far as arrangements regarding the future are concerned. As it declared at its Ramgarh session, 1940, "Nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of Imperialism, and Dominion Status or any other status within the Imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to British politics and economic structure." The August resolution of 1942 was a powerful re-statement of the same resolution.

The Congress has always repudiated the idea that the task of framing our future constitution can be left to the British Government. It has always believed that it should be entrusted to a Constituent Assembly elected in India on the basis of adult suffrage. In his hurricane election tour of 1936-37, Jawaharlal Nehru had spread the idea far and wide in the country. It also formed an integral part of the Congress election manifesto of 1936. In March 1937, while condemning the Act of 1935, the Congress Working Committee declared, on behalf of the people that "they desire to frame their own constitution, based on national independence, through the medium of a Constituent Assembly, elected by adult franchise". In fact as Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out, the Congress accepted office in 1937, not 'to work the constitution in

the normal way' but to stultify the constitution and prepare the ground for the Constituent Assembly and independence." The project was further expounded by the Congress Working Committee to the end of 1939. The Assembly, it explained, should be elected 'on the basis of adult suffrage,' the minorities being represented in accordance with their numerical strength and by separate electorates if so desired. "This Assembly can frame a constitution," said the resolution, "in which the rights of accepted minorities would be protected to their satisfaction, and in the event of some matters relating to minority rights not being mutually agreed to, they can be referred to arbitration." This method of a Constituent Assembly was, in the opinion of the Working Committee, 'the only democratic method of determining the constitution of a free country'. The Congress considered such an Assembly alone to be 'the adequate instrument for solving the communal and other difficulties'. A few days later, Gandhiji who had hitherto shown little interest in the Assembly plan, announced his conversion to it.<sup>1</sup> In March 1940, it was advocated in the open session of the Congress. Even when the Congress launched upon an 'open rebellion' in August 1942, it had its eyes fixed on the Constituent Assembly. Jawaharlal Nehru, while explaining the implications of the August resolution said, "On the withdrawal of British rule in India responsible men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional

1. *Harijan*, Nov. 25, 1949.



Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India, which will later evolve a scheme by which a Constituent Assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the Government of India, acceptable to all sections of the people”.

How far is the British Government prepared to concede this demand for a Constituent Assembly? The Viceroy had declared in August 1940, on behalf of the British Government that ‘they will most readily assent to the sitting up, after the conclusion of the war, with the least possible delay, of a body representative of the principal elements in India’s national life in order to devise the frame work of the new constitution’, and that, in the meantime ‘they will lend every aid in their power to hasten decision on all relevant matters to the utmost degree’. But, there is a world of difference between this body and the Constituent Assembly demanded by the Congress. It is one thing to entrust the work of constitution-smaking to a body ‘representative of the principal elements in India’s national life’ whose basis of representation as well as the terms of reference were as yet undefined, and quite another to get this work done by a Constituent Assembly elected by the Indian people, on the basis of adult suffrage and vested with ultimate sovereign rights. The British Government moved a good deal far beyond their earlier position in the Cripps proposals of 1942. Sir Stafford Cripps suggested the formation of a constitution-making body, not directly elected by the people of

India on the basis of adult suffrage, but indirectly elected by provincial legislatures, which themselves would continue to be constituted on the basis of most limited franchise exercised through the most faulty methods of representation. But in spite of this defective method of composition, the British Government could have been credited with having taken a really constructive step, had they not proposed to load this constitution-making body with nominees of Indian princes. As such, the Congress had no alternative but to reject the suggestion. "Even the constitution-making body", the Congress deplored, while rejecting the rest of the Cripps Offer, "is so constituted that the people's right to self-determination is vitiated by the introduction of none-representative elements". The British Government have, thus, while accepting the principle that the future constitution of India will be framed by Indians themselves, have not yet seen their way to accept the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly.

Several arguments are brought forward to oppose the demand for a Constituent Assembly. The foremost of them, of course, is that it is not acceptable to the minorities. The Muslim League has set its face against it from the very beginning, Mr Jinnah being of opinion that the Assembly would be nothing but 'a packed body, manoeuvred and managed by a Congress caucus.'<sup>1</sup> Other minority groups too have not shown much enthusiasm for the idea. It is contended that while the Congress has agreed to

minor points being submitted to arbitration, the major issues would undoubtedly be decided by a simple majority vote—whereas the very essence of the Muslim revolt is its rejection of 'numerical democracy' and 'majority rule'. It is further asked how a mere extension of the basis of the constitution-making body to the entire population of the country would facilitate a correct expression of the wishes of all the Indian people as to the form of government under which they want to live. The wider the franchise is extended, it is argued, the more of uneducated peasantry and manual labourers would be drawn within its orbit, and this element would be the most easy prey for demagogic influences. This will hardly be conducive to communal understanding. "It seems probable," writes Prof. Coupland, "that the results of the Assembly elections would reflect the communal schism at least as much as the normal provincial elections. In fact, when the new machinery for registering the electors and holding the gigantic poll has been set up at vast expenditure of time and money, the product would be much the same as that which the existing machinery could provide with no extra labour or cost. The only substantial difference would be that the number of votes cast would be far greater. Would this make it easier to obtain a constitutional agreement? The only way to obtain it is by compromise, and that is not assisted by marshalling the masses behind the desputants."<sup>1</sup> It is also

1. *The Constitutional Problem in India*, vol. III p. 84.

pointed out that the idea of a Constituent Assembly belongs to the period before the communal schism had become so deep as it is now, but that, in the existing circumstances, it would merely be 'a useless and costly duplication of the existing machinery for giving expression to the wishes of the people'.

Another argument that is generally brought forward in support of the above line of reasoning is that the discussion and drafting of a new constitution is a business which ought to be entrusted, not to people, but, to experts and especially to men who have had experience of government, and that the smaller their number, the more likely they are to reach agreement. Sir Maurice Gwyer in his Benares University Convocation Address, 1939, said, "(In a small body) men come to know each other better, to appreciate the strong points of another's case and to realize the weaker points of their own. The impact of mind upon mind has its effect, and after sometime....a sort of corporate sense is born, out of which there may emerge if not a common will, at least a common desire to produce results."<sup>1</sup> The learned Chief Justice also pointed out that whenever a Constituent Assembly elected on a wide franchise has attempted the task of constitution-making, it has signally failed. The work of the 900 members of the National Convention elected to draft a constitution for Revolutionary France in

<sup>1</sup> Laski suggested, in an interview to Reuter's political correspondent, on Nov. 16, 1945, that a Constituent Assembly for India should be small and should carry on its work in secret sessions, like the Philadelphia Convention, which framed the U.S.A. Constitution.

1795 was the prelude to Napoleon and twenty years of war, the work of 900 members of the Constituent Assembly elected to draft a constitution for the French Republic in 1848 was the prelude to the Second Empire and Sedan. The German National Assembly of 1848, which was attended by about 500 delegates, also failed to achieve its object. The Assembly at Weimar in 1919, which numbered about 420, gave birth to a Constitution which did not survive its infancy. The Russian Constituent Assembly elected in 1917 by the votes of 45 million people, met only once. The principal constitution, on the other hand, which have so far stood the test of time were all the product of small bodies of men, chosen not by great popular electorates but by their legislatures or governments. The average attendance on the Philadelphia Convention which created the United States was 30. The two conferences which created the Dominion of Canada were attended by 22 and 33 delegates respectively. The National Conventions which created the Commonwealth of Australia and the Union of South Africa consisted of 50 and 30 members each. The existing Constitution of the U.S.S.R. was framed by a body of 31. The proceedings of almost all these conferences were kept a dead secret.<sup>1</sup>

All these arguments appear to be fairly convincing. But they merely suppress the true and emphasise what is untrue. The main difference between the constitution-making body proposed by the British Government and the Constituent

assembly demanded by the Congress is not that the one insists on a small number of delegates and secretly and the other is anxious for a large, unwieldy body, with each constituent group ready to pick up a quarrel. The Congress has nowhere suggested that the Constituent Assembly shall necessarily be large or that it will refuse to hold its deliberations in secrecy. The main difference between the Government proposals and the Congress demand is that the one envisages a body based on the most narrow franchise, whereas the other insists on broadbasing it on the consent of every able-bodied adult in India. The main difference, thus, is between a denial, and an insistence upon, democratic rights. The Government is not prepared to extend the franchise, as it is afraid of unleashing terrific popular forces. The Congress, on the other hand, is anxious that those forces are released and that the future constitution of the country is based upon them. Democracy knows of no alternative. If we want to frame a democratic constitution for India, the constituent machinery should also be democratic. All the constitutions mentioned by Sir Maurice Gwyer which, according to him, have stood the test of time, were roadbased on democratic forces. The two methods generally adopted for electing the Constituent Assembly—the one based on direct election, as in Australia, Germany (1919), Austria (1919), Ireland (1922) and various States of Central and South-Eastern Europe after 1919, and the other, on the election by the legislatures of the federal units, as in U.S.A., South Africa etc.—are



of these plans may be referred to a small committee. There might also be a co-ordinating committee to co-ordinate the work of the other committees. The Assembly as a whole may meet only in plenary sessions first, to determine the general outlines of the constitution-making and, then, to consider the reports and recommendations of the committees.

The Constituent Assembly, once it is formed, will lay down its own procedure of work. It will elect its own president, determine the basic principles of our future constitution and appoint the various committees for drawing the outlines of that constitution. It will be for the Constituent Assembly to decide whether our future constitution will be federal or unitary. It will also determine the division of powers between the Centre and the Provinces, the nature of relations between the various branches of administration, the extent of franchise, the method of representation, the restrictions that will be necessary on the economic policy of the government and such other problems. It will appoint committees for the study of various problems, perhaps a co-ordinating committee also to co-ordinate the work of these various committees, and, then, discuss the reports submitted by these committees. It will also have the final authority to sanction the constitution as it emerges out of the study and deliberation, discussion and debate, carried over a long period in the committees. It will be guided in this work by the experience of other constituent assemblies which have met



other countries in the past—the Federal Convention of the United States, the Constituent Assemblies which framed the constitutions of the European States at the end of the last World War and the Federal Convention which framed the constitution of Australia. A Constituent Assembly according to Jawaharlal Nehru, 'does not mean a body of people, or a gathering of able lawyers, who are intent on drawing up a constitution. It means a nation on the move, throwing away the spell of its past political and social structure, and fashioning for itself a new government of its own making. It means the masses of the country in action through their elected representatives.'<sup>1</sup> A constitution framed and approved by such an Assembly is likely to be acceptable to the entire country. The Constituent Assembly, in fact, will symbolise our determination to free ourselves from political domination and economic exploitation. Its sphere of action, naturally, will be above communal conflicts. As such a constituent assembly alone is the adequate instrument for solving the communal problems.

### INDO-BRITISH TREATY

The Constituent Assembly, whether elected directly on the basis of adult suffrage or indirectly by an electoral College consisting of members of the provincial legislature, will have to take up the question of an Indio-British Treaty. The idea of such a Treaty was brought to the forefront by Sir Stafford Cripps. Clause

1 Quoted by N. Ganguli, *Constituent Assembly for India* p. 244.

(C) (ii) of the Draft Declaration lays down as one of the conditions for implementing an Indian Constitution 'the signing of a Treaty—negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the Constitution-making body'. "The Treaty", according to Sir Stafford Cripps "will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands". It will also "make provision, in accordance with undertakings given by H. M. S. for the protection of racial and religious minorities". But it "will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other member States of the British Commonwealth". Sir Stafford Cripps further declared that "whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its Treaty arrangements so far as this may be required in the new situation". That the British Government has not dropped the idea, in spite of much water, as well as fire, having flown since then both under and over the bridges of Ganges and Thames, was made clear by Premier Attlee in the latest declaration of his Government's policy on September 19, 1945. "The broad definition of British policy", said Mr. Attlee, "towards India contained in the declaration of 1942, which had the support of all parties in this country, stands in all its fullness and purpose. This declaration envisaged the negotiation of a Treaty between the British Government and the constitution-making body. The Government is giving immediate consideration to the

contents of such a Treaty". It now transpires that Sir B. Narsingha Rau, Officer on Special Duty in the Reforms Office of the Government of India, has also begun studying problems connected with such a Treaty. His terms of reference, it is understood, are in accordance with those laid down in the Cripps' proposals.

Sir Stafford Cripps, while making the suggestion, had precedents of such treaties being negotiated between the British Government and Ireland, Egypt and South Africa—though none of them had been negotiated between the British Government and a constitution-making body. The Treaty with Ireland, signed on Dec. 6, 1921, had a very chequered career. The British Government had, in 1920, at Llyod George's initiative, formulated a Constitution for Ireland, providing two separate governments in that country, each having its own parliament, linked up by a federal council, matters like national defence and foreign relations being reserved for the exclusive jurisdiction of the British Government. The Irish people decided to boycott this super-imposed constitution. They refused to elect members to the proposed parliament, or to obey the orders of the British authorities. For a time the British Government tried coercion, but soon convinced of the impracticability of such a policy, it opened negotiations for a treaty. Certain members of the British Cabinet and an equal number of representatives from the Dail Eireann undertook the negotiations and eventually were able to

agree upon the draft of a treaty, which was duly ratified by both the British Parliament and the Irish Dail. The first two clauses of this Treaty laid down that Ireland would have the same status as the Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa and that the relation of the Irish Free State to the Imperial Parliament and Government would be the same as that of these Dominions. But the very fact that the constitution needed acceptance by the British Parliament before being put into operation showed that it was not based on the idea of Ireland's complete independence. It was against this rock that the Irish Constitution was shipwrecked during the next ten years, it was several times amended, and in 1932, when De Valera became the head of the Government, it was set aside and, for all practical purposes, Ireland became completely free from British control. The new constitution of 1937 is virtually a complete break with Great Britain. The Treaty of Alliance between the United Kingdom and Egypt, signed on August 26, 1936, was on a different plane. It merely laid down that an alliance was being established between the two countries "with a view to consolidating their friendship, their cordial understanding and their good relations", and provided for mutual representation by duly accredited ambassadors.

The proposed Indo-British Treaty also promises to place India on a footing of equality with other Dominions. But it imposes serious

restrictions on Indian freedom, when it talks of provision for the 'protection of racial and religious minorities' and says that this provision has to be made 'in accordance with undertakings given by H.M.S.' A similar provision in the Anglo-Irish Treaty merely laid down that neither the Parliament of Irish Free State nor that of Northern Ireland shall make any law so as either directly or indirectly to endow any religion or prohibit or restrict the free exercise thereof or give any preference or impose any disability on account of any religious belief or religious status or make any discrimination in respect to State aid to schools or admission of children to aided schools. Now, the proper place where such a guarantee can find a place is not in a treaty with a foreign country but in the future constitution of the country. No Treaty which imposes the slightest restriction on the full national sovereignty of India can be acceptable to the Indian people. The Congress is already committed to the principle of safeguarding the position of minorities by a declaration of fundamental rights about their civil liberty, freedom of religion and non-discrimination in the matter of public services, etc. There should be no difficulty in making this declaration of fundamental rights an integral part of the Indian Constitution.

What, then, shall the Indo-British Treaty contain? Defence is supposed to be an important matter to be dealt with in the Treaty. In the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, articles 7 and 8 provide for the maintenance of troops for the

defence of Suez Canal, and for facilities and assistance to be rendered in the event of Britain becoming involved in War with other powers. But Egypt's case is different. She stands as a sentry on one of the vital links of the life-line of the Empire. In the case of India, no such vital strategic need is involved. But perhaps the British forces and officers, who form an important part of the Indian army today, may stay on in this country, and their condition of service may have to be deprived by the Treaty. There is absolutely no reason why it should be so. A free India will have no need of British forces to help her in her defence. The British troops in India must immediately be withdrawn and either incorporated in the Home army or dissolved after a suitable compensation is paid to them. It may be recalled in this connection that a similar method was adopted in the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The agreement provided for 'fair compensation, to be paid by the Irish State, to judges, officials, members of police forces and other public servants who are discharged by it or who retire in consequence of the change of government effected in pursuance thereof'. The Soulbury Commission also recommended a similar provision in connection with Ceylon reforms. The problem can be tackled in our country also on similar lines. There are some people who think that even if we may be able to dispense with British army, we may have to depend on British navy for some time. Provision may, therefore, have to be made for port and harbour facilities for the British navy, as

Anglo-Irish Treaty. But, again, we cannot forget that whereas Ireland was an integral part of England's own defences, the case of India is very different. If a similar provision is made in the case of India, it will mean a continuance of imperialistic chains round about her girdle. In fact, whatever help we take from England's army or navy for the training of our own forces should be absolutely voluntary. Any deviation from this healthy principle will be incompatible with the interests of India.

In fact, our Treaty with England ought to be definitely based on two important principles. Firstly, it should not place any restrictions whatsoever on India's full national sovereignty. This would, naturally, mean that it should have nothing to do with India's internal problems. The minorities' problems are exclusively of that nature. The problems of the maintenance of law and order inside the country, and of national defence against external aggression, also belong to the same category. The Treaty, as Mr. Attlee has accepted, 'shall not seek to provide for anything incompatible with the interests of India'. Secondly, there must be specific provision for future amendments and changes in that Treaty, to accord with changes in times and circumstances. It is possible that today we might agree to support a demagogue England in a conflict with forces of fascist aggression, but we may have to reconsider our attitude towards her if, tomorrow, she throws overboard her democratic institutions, and enters into a close alliance with reactionary forces as against the progressive

ones. There might be a clash also between our interests in our neighbouring countries and Britain's desire to have them in her control along with other imperial powers. It is clear that under such changed circumstances, we would not feel ourselves bound by the Treaty obligations which we accept now. Another important point which would need clarification is to lay down as to what authority shall have the power to interpret the terms of the Treaty, in case there is a difference of opinion between the High Contracting Parties and to enforce the observation of these terms by the parties concerned. This authority can be vested only in some highly respected international organization.

I strongly feel that the treaty-making with England and the constitution-making for India should be two different works—even though they may have to be performed by the same constitution-making body. The *Treaty* will deal with those problems alone which concern, on the one side, with the future relationship of India and England, and, on the other, with the Indo-British position in the wider context of international relationship. It may include, for example, certain trade agreements. India may agree to provide special facilities for the consumption of British goods in return for England's help in the work of her industrialization. The *Constitution*, on the other hand, will be an effort to solve the internal problems of the country. It will, indeed, be a gigantic effort. A thousand and one complicated problems will



have to be decided. The very economy of the task would require that this body is able to command the widest sanction, in other words, is elected on the basis of adult suffrage. A suggestion has been thrown in this connection that the constitution-making body must only frame the future constitution of India, and leave the work of treaty-making in the hands of the Government framed on the basis of that constitution. But this seems to be clearly impracticable. Unless a treaty is first made between the British Government and the Indian Constitution-making body, according to which the sovereign power is unconditionally transferred to the latter, it will not be possible for a really stable government to be formed. Under these circumstances, the only feasible method of formulating the Indo-British Treaty seems to be the opening of negotiations between the British Government and the Indian Constituent Assembly.

## ✓ FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

A number of constitutional devices can be adopted for bringing about a greater adjustment on the communal plane. The most important of this will be the declaration of certain fundamental rights and their inclusion in the constitution both of the Central Government and of the provincial units. On the question of the inclusion of fundamental rights in the constitution there are two schools of thought. The British writers generally do not believe in the inclusion of such fundamental rights in the

constitution. They think that it would be difficult for these rights to be implemented by law courts and that if they were so implemented they would lead to a good deal of confusion. But the British view does not seem to carry conviction with the constitutional authorities in other countries, for we find that almost every country of the world has got a number of fundamental rights interwoven in its constitution. In the United States of America, in Germany and all the new States of South Eastern Europe created after the last Great War, in U.S.S.R., every where we find a particular emphasis laid on these fundamental rights.

In India, it appears that it will be absolutely necessary to have a list of such rights. The Indian people seem to be strongly in favour of such a thing. The Indian National Congress drew up in its Karachi Session in 1931 a charter of fundamental rights which it reiterated in the A.C.C. resolution of November 1, 1937, and further expanded in the Working Committee Resolution 11, 1945. The Muslim League in its Lahore resolution of 1940 also demanded "adequate effective and mandatory safeguards to be specially provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and the regions for the protection of the religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them." The wordings of the resolution are rather vague. It is not clearly mentioned what safe-guards are to be required but if we go back to the 14-point statement of Muslims claims adopted in

the All-India Muslim Conference in 1929 we find these safeguards enumerated there. It is demanded "that the Indian constitution should embody adequate safeguards for protection and promotion of Muslim education, language, religion, personal law and Muslim Charitable Institutions and for the one share in grants and aids." It is thus clear that there is a general conscientious of opinion in our country in favour of having a list of fundamental rights included in our future constitution.

The value of such a declaration of fundamental rights being included in the Indian constitution is immense. We can look at it mainly from two points of view. Firstly, it will be a constant reminder to the legislatures as to what laws they have to frame and formulate, and under what limits they have to work. If there is such a charter the legislature cannot be expected to violate either its spirit or its letter. If it tries to do so there will be the Supreme Court and other judicial bodies to take notice of it. Possibly such an action will be immediately declared *ultra vires*. There is another advantage in a declaration of rights. It serves as a means of education to the specifically minorities themselves. They know where they stand. They know what rights they have got in exercise. They can also appreciate that they have got a position in the state which cannot be lightly taken away from them. They can feel a psychological satisfaction that even though they are a minority in the state the latter is anxious to see that their rights are pro-

perly safeguarded.

## WHAT RIGHTS ARE TO BE INCLUDED ?

The next question which arises is as to what rights are to be included in such a declaration. Here we can take a leaf from the rights included in the post-war European constitutions. The list of fundamental rights is generally a fairly exhaustive one. It includes different kinds of rights. There are cultural rights. Let us first take up the question of *civil* and *political* rights. We may, in this connection straightway, adopt the list finally approved of by the Congress Working Committee, on December 11, 1945. "The Constitution," so runs the resolution, shall provide for fundamental rights, among them the following :—

(1) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or morality.

(2) Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.

(3) The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.

(4) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.

(5) No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, cast, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power.

or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.

(6) All citizens have equal rights in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of State or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of general public.

(7) Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms, in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf.

(8) No person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated, save in accordance with law.

(9) The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.

(10) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

(11) The State shall provide for free and compulsory basic education.

(12) Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to follow any trade or calling, and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

"The State shall further provide all necessary safeguards for the protection and development of the backward or suppressed elements in the population, so that they might make rapid progress and take a full and equal part in national life. In particular, the State will help in the development of the people of the tribal areas in a manner most suited to their genius, and in the education and social and economic

progress of the Scheduled Classes.

### POLITICAL SAFEGUARDS

It will, however, not be enough, under the Indian conditions, to rest at that. At least for an interim period, of ten or fifteen years—the best thing would be to specify it—it will be necessary to evolve certain special safeguards in order to give full assurance to the minorities. Among the most important of these safeguards will be the distribution of seats in the legislature. The main ground of the Muslim opposition to the freedom movement is that they fear that if 'the logic democracy' is allowed to prevail, the Hindus would be able to capture a majority of seats in the legislature, and would continue to hold it for all time to come. So what they fear is a Hindu *raj*. The Muslim League is not opposed to democracy as such, or even to parliamentary institutions: all that it is opposed to is that system of democratic government which gave the Hindu-dominated Congress to establish its governments in most of the provinces. Such a thing, Mr. Jinnah has made it clear, should not be permitted to be repeated.

I am quite familiar with the opposite argument which says that if the Hindus are in a majority, they have every right to establish their own government. But that is not my conception of democracy. For me, democracy is not a mere majority rule. It is government of the *people* as such for the people *as a whole*. So, if the Muslims have a genuine fear that the

Hindu domination would lead to an extriction of their culture, an effort should be made to allay this fear by giving them some additional seats in the legislature, some kind of weightage over and above the number of seats to which they are entitled on the basis of their population. The idea is not new to the Indian constitution. Already we find the principles of reservation of seats and weightage quite integral factors of our constitutional machinery. They may be deplorable factors, but they have to be retained for sometime. The Communal Award of 1932 assigns to the Muslims 33.3 p.c. of total seats in British India, and gives them additional weightage in the Punjab and Bengal legislatures. So far as the Central Legislature is concerned, the number may be further increased. Sometime back, Sir Sultan Ahmed suggested a parity of seats between Caste-Hindus and Muslims, each of them to be awarded 40 p.c. of the seats, and a division of the remaining seats between the Scheduled Castes on the one side and the other Minorities like Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, Anglo-Indians, etc., on the other. This would involve a reduction of Hindu seats to 40 p.c. whereas they are in reality entitled to 60.37 p.c. and the increment of the Muslim seats from above 24 p.c. to 40 p.c. It certainly demands a sacrifice from the Hindus, but I do not understand how it is likely to affect the Hindu interests. The Hindus will not in any way be inferior to the Muslims. If they pull their weight—and there is no reason why for the sake of vital Hindu interests they will not do so—and if they

can carry the Scheduled Castes with them, they will still be in a majority, of course, not in a dominating majority. Similarly, the Muslims for any right cause will certainly be able to depend on the various minorities, if not on the Hindu members, for support. Dr. Beni Prasad, in his memorandum to the Sapru Committee, suggested a slight increase in the number of Caste-Hindus at the cost of minorities other than the Scheduled Castes. He suggested the following division: Caste-Hindus 43, Muslims 40, Scheduled Castes 10, other minorities 7. The Sapru Committee, however has suggested a parity of seats between the Hindus (other than Scheduled Castes) and the Muslims—"in spite of the great disparity in their respective population strength".

### SEPARATE ELECTORATES

But this suggestion for parity, as it comes from the Sapru Committee, is not unconditional. It is proposed to be enforced only at the Muslims agreeing to a suspension of the separate electorates. "The Committee desire to emphasize their view", so run the proposals, "that if the recommendation is not to be implemented in its entirety; the Hindu Community should be at liberty not merely to agree to the claim for parity of representation but to ask for a revision of the Communal Award." It is difficult to have two sensible opinions, opposed to each other, on the matter of separate electorates. If they continue, even after the British rule is gone, they will be its



worst legacy. But the Muslim opinion today seems to be strongly wedded to them. While rejecting the Cripps Offer, the Muslim League made it clear that it considered separate electorates as 'the only sure way in which true representatives of the Musalmans can be chosen'. As long as the minorities do not fully agree, it may be difficult to abolish separate electorates. Moreover, if the principle of parity has any merit, it should be adopted without any corresponding conditions being fixed. But separate electorates have certainly got to be modified. *If it is necessary, from the Muslim point of view, to ensure that the Muslim representatives truly represent the Muslim community, it is also necessary from the nationalist point of view, that they are not enemies of the wider interests of the country; in fact, we have to blend and harmonize those two seemingly opposite points of view.* A compromise formula may be evolved on the lines of Māulana Mohammed Ali's proposals before the Unity Conference at Allahabad. He had suggested that, one of the candidates who have secured at least 30% of the votes polled of their own community "the candidate who secure the highest number of votes polled on the joint electorate shall be declared elected. In case there is no candidate who has secured 30% of votes polled of his own community, out of the two candidates who secure the highest number of votes of their own community, the candidate shall be declared elected who secures the highest number of votes of the total votes polled." At any rate,

it should be a condition of the election of a Muslim, or any other candidate elected on the basis of separate electorates, to secure at least a certain percentage—it may be 20 or 25—of votes cast by other communities.

### ABOLITION OF 'EXTERNAL' & 'PERSONAL' FACTORS

A very powerful safeguard of the minority interests so far used to be the Governor or the Governor-General. The Act of 1935 places special responsibility upon these dignitaries. In fact, they are the pivots round which the whole scheme of communal safeguards revolves. It is for them to ensure that the minorities get proper representation in the executive bodies, both of the Centre and the Provincial Governments. It is for them to see that no discrimination is made against them by the legislative bodies. It is, again, for them to secure their educational and cultural rights. Even the Cripps Proposals do not envisage any relaxation of the British right to interfere on behalf of minorities. The treaty which was to be signed between the Indian Union and Britain was "to cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands," and also to "make provision.... for the protection of racial and religious minorities." But in a constitution based on the freedom of India, no such 'personal' or 'external' factors can be allowed to continue. The Governor's as well as the Governor-General's special responsibilities have to go. If it is,

somehow, considered necessary to retain these officials for a transitional period, they shall remain only as constitutional heads of administration, and will have no power to interfere in the democratic rights of the people in the name of minority interests.

The abolition of these 'external' and 'personal' factors would involve the need of formulating some mechanical devices. One such device can be the leaving the decisions on communal matters not to a mere majority of the House but to a fixed proportion of the members representing the community affected. The Congress constitution had a provision—which was deleted in 1921—to the effect that no subject could be discussed or resolution carried in the session if three-fourths of the Muslim or of the Hindu delegates opposed, provided that the objectors constituted not less than one-fourth of the whole assembly. The Muslim League demanded in 1929 that "no bill, resolution, motion or amendment regarding inter-communal matters be moved, discussed or passed by any legislature, Central or Provincial, if a three-fourths majority of the numbers of either the Hindu or the Muslims Community affected thereby in that legislature oppose." If due to some reason or other, that suggestion is not accepted, we might adopt some such thing as the Scotch-vote system, according to which debate and voting on purely Scotch affairs is confined practically to Scotch members of the British House of Commons. In our country, a convention may be brought into existence, by

which affairs concerning the personal law or culture of a single community may be settled by its own representatives forming something like a Standing Committee. There will, of course, be the difficulty of determining whether a bill or resolution does really affect the communal issues. For resolving this Dr. Beni Prasad's suggestion of leaving the decision to the presiding officer of the Lower Chamber in consultation with the Board of Conciliation might be adopted.

### BOARD OF CONCILIATION

This raises the problem of organizing a Board of Conciliation, or some such body, which may act as an advisory body, and may offer advice on communal matters referred to it by the legislature or the government. It may also act as a sort of sociological research bureau in order to keep itself in touch with the day-to-day communal psychology in the country, and may offer advice on its own initiative also. How will such a body be constituted? It may consist of representatives of different communities in the legislature, either in accordance with their communal strength or on the basis of a fixed number for each community. A number of members of the Board will necessarily have to be co-opted by the legislatures or by the Board itself. The Sapru Committee has proposed the organization of Minorities' Commissions consisting of a representative for each of the communities (not necessarily a member of that community) represented in the Legislature, to

be elected by the members but not to be one of them. I do not, however, see the necessity of inserting the clause that 'no member of the Legislature shall be eligible for the membership of the Commission'. The only advantage that it might be expected to yield is that it would give the Commission a detached and non-political outlook. But the disadvantages would be greater. The other suggestions of the Sapru Committee may be bodily adopted. Besides the Boards of Conciliation attached to the Central and Provincial Legislatures, a number of Goodwill Committees also may be organized in towns, and even in villages. But they need not be purely nominated bodies. They should be partly nominated, and partly elected, though for some time they may have to be presided over by government nominees.

### REPRESENTATION IN SERVICES

The time has possibly not yet come for giving up minority representation in public services. The present arrangements might continue—again, for a specified period of ten or fifteen years—though possibly the high percentage of representation given to the Anglo-Indians may have to be immediately brought down. But this should certainly not be at the cost of efficiency. The maintenance of the provision itself would be undesirable in principle, but if it further led to a sacrifice of efficiency, it would make matters much worse. The system may be continued for a limited period. But, for a long-range solution of the problem,

the principle of *depoliticization*—already proceeding with rapid strides in the U. S. A.—has to be adopted. As much of current administration as possible should be taken out of party-politics and entrusted to autonomous or semi-autonomous commissions, such as public services commission, statutory railway authority, national investment board, broadcasting corporation, electricity board etc. This, in Dr. Beni Prasad's words 'will serve to assuage communal feeling, forestall communal grievances and at the same time keep the bureaucracy in touch with all sections of opinion'.

### THE EXECUTIVE

Then, we have to take into consideration the constitution of the Executive. Here, we are faced with the problem of selecting between a parliamentary and other systems. Much has been said about the inappropriateness of parliamentary institutions to conditions prevailing in our country. It is pointed out that the essence of parliamentary system is the fact of there being always in existence on the floor of the House an alternative administration able and willing to take the responsibilities of government. In a country where political parties are organized on the basis of religion, and where the followers of a single religion constitute two-thirds of the entire population, it is contended that the majority party, confident of retaining for ever the reins of administration, will not be guided by any great sense of responsibility, and the minorities will fail to get

adequate expression for their political and cultural genius. If, on the other hand, the majority party is aware of the fact that in case it works against the popular wish or interests, power is likely to be taken out of its hands and vested in the minority group, it would always tend to act with a spirit of conciliation towards the minorities, and a greater sense of responsibility. It is also, further, pointed out that the parliamentary government being the peculiar outcome of conditions prevailing in Great Britain, it may not be wise to transplant it in Indian soil. As Lord Bryce puts it, "the English Constitution, which we admire as a masterpiece of delicate and complicated mechanism, would anywhere but in England be full of difficulties and dangers—it works by a body of understanding which no writer can formulate and of habits which centuries have been needed to instil". It is true that we have not yet been able to develop either that understanding or those habits in our country. But the picture painted by the Joint Select Committee in their report is certainly very highly exaggerated". "There are in India", it said, "no parties as we understand them, and no mobile body of public opinion such as we have described. In their place we are confronted with the secular antagonism of Hindu and Mohammedan, representatives not only of two religions but of two civilizations, with numerous self-contained and exclusive minorities, all a prey to anxiety for their future and profoundly suspicious of the majority and of one another; and with the rigid

and innumerable divisions of caste, itself a denial and repudiation of every democratic principle."

This analysis does not place the true facts before the reader. It is true that the basis of many of our political parties is communal to a certain extent, but our biggest, most powerful and most widely accepted political party, namely the Congress, has been organized on a basis which is truly political. Among other organizations, the Muslim League alone can claim some standing, but it is communal by mere accident : its main role is reactionary. Due to the backwardness of the Muslim society, the reactionary elements have put on the garb of communalism. But even in the Muslim society, the progressive forces are now coming forward, and during the last few months, they have also been able to organize themselves. The fact that different political groups are being organized within the Congress itself confirms the idea that as soon as the Congress attains its primary objective, namely Indian independence, it might wind up itself and there might arise, out of its ashes, phoenix-like, a large number of political parties. I believe that the conditions are being rapidly created in our country in which it will become possible to operate parliamentary institutions quite successfully. I also believe that the present attitude of the Muslim League towards Indian nationalism does not reflect the true opinion of the Muslim masses, and that sooner or later—sooner rather than later—the Muslim League will either have to mend its attitude or will have to be prepared



to end its existence. The colourful clouds of Pakistan on which it floats today are bound to get dissolved as soon as the rays of truth and understanding warm up. Another fact, which also we cannot ignore, is that we have received our entire political education during the last eighty-five years in the school of British political institutions. It will not be easy to efface the ideas that we have imbibed during this long contact. In our remaking of the future, we cannot completely break ourselves away from the past. All this points in the direction of accepting the British Parliamentary System. But this, of course, does not mean that if we adopt the principle of the parliamentary system in our country, we should not be willing to make drastic changes in details, to make those institutions conform to Indian needs and requirements.

Some people suggest an adoption of the American Presidential System, under which the election of the Chief Executive is based on direct popular vote, his tenure of office is fixed and he is made completely independent of the legislature. But they forget that the system has been responsible for a constant friction between the executive and the legislative branches of the administration in the U.S.A., and has not been adopted anywhere else in the world. The opinion of a larger section of constitutionalists seems to be in favour of our adopting the Swiss system. Switzerland has a plural executive, the members of which are picked up from all the important political parties and

cantons and are directly elected by the two chambers in a joint session. In this connection also a few things have got to be noted. Firstly, a constitution suited to a small, isolated country and the product of its peculiar historical circumstances, will hardly be suited to a vast country like India. Secondly, we cannot forget the fact that whenever an attempt was made to transplant the Swiss system abroad—such attempts were made in Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Ireland—it failed. Above all, the establishment of such a system in our country will lead to a complete elimination of constitutional opposition, and thus, place too much power in the hands of the party leaders. Under these circumstances, it may not prove very advisable to copy the Swiss model in India.

Still another suggestion for the constitution of the central executive proposes to substitute for the large Federal Assembly of the 1935 Act a Council of thirty or forty members, elected by provincial legislatures and by the States and 'composed in such a way that each important interest in the country would be represented, and none would have a majority'. The central executive or Cabinet would be selected from its members either by the Governor-General or by a prime minister who might himself be nominated by the Governor-General or elected by the Council for a fixed term, and would include representatives of the major parties as well as of the States. It would serve for a fixed term and would be responsible not to the Council but to the Governor-General. It would

of course be necessary for them to remain in close touch with the Federal Council and to consult it upon all questions of policy. The advocates of the scheme point out (i) that it would ensure each political party a share and none such a monopoly of power as to make it an object of fear for the minorities and the Indian States, (ii) that, by restricting the membership of the Federal Council, it would enable the development of a greater sense of responsibility in the Cabinet, and would also ensure a greater harmony in the relations of the executive and the legislature, and (iii) that it would enable the cabinet to be sufficiently 'popular' to satisfy the legislature.

There is, undoubtedly, one great point in favour of this scheme: the basis of representation that it proposes is geographical, and not communal. But there are so many other factors which make it impossible for us to accept it. First of all, it conceives of an executive which is both fixed and irremovable: it will be futile to expect any great sense of responsibility from such a body. Secondly, it depends so much on the support of the political parties that it is likely to shift the basis of political power from the people to party leaders. It is also open to question how long will a body, representative of so many different and divergent groups, be able to maintain itself. In fact, such an executive body, in order to succeed, needs a very different atmosphere in the country from what exists today, an atmosphere in which our political parties will be guided by the motive of

national interests and not of self aggrandizement. Besides, we cannot also rule out the fact that even if such an executive succeeds in the Centre, it may not suit many of the provinces. It would be pointed out, in reply, that the nature of the executive may differ from Centre to Provinces, or from one province to another, and that in provinces where the minorities represent only a small percentage, the present form of parliamentary government might be retained but that in other provinces, where communal difficulties might prove intractable, other schemes might be adopted. Such an experimentation, however, will cost much in terms of national unity, and will also lead to a large number of complications. If we want to establish a true federal government at the Centre, we will have to insist on a certain amount of uniformity in the provincial administrations too. The one system of administration which, with certain modifications here and there, to suit varying circumstances, can be successfully adopted by all provinces is the British parliamentary system. The only difficulty that it is likely to confront in our country is the communal complexion of our political parties but, as pointed out in the earlier pages, our political parties are now quickly getting out of their communal moorings; the dividing line between the political parties now is less communal than economic and political. Constitutional devices, referred to above, are bound to accelerate the process still further. In fact, with the establishment of parity of representa-

tion in the legislature, modification of separate electorates and appointment of bodies like the Boards of Conciliation and the Goodwill Committees, a definite swing in the other direction would begin.

Till that period and no further—certainly not as a permanent measure—the expediency of coalition ministries may be adopted. The parliamentary system allows the formation of such coalition ministries under certain emergent circumstances. But it would be wrong to make them a permanent feature of our political life: that would be like converting medicine into a daily article of diet. If mixed cabinets have got to be formed, I would prefer coalition ministries to composite ones. Here I strongly disagree with the Sapru Committee suggestions. Instead of various communities being given a fixed representation on the executive, various political parties—which are rapidly changing their complexion and are bound ultimately to get completely transformed under the working of constitutional devices and a healthier atmosphere in the country—ought to be invited to constitute it. As soon as these political parties get altogether changed and reorganized on the basis of economic and political ideologies, our executive body will automatically become a representative of the various sections and cross-sections of economic and political thought in the country. It will then become a true coalition government in the sense in which coalition governments have sometimes got to be formed in England, France, Belgium or Greece. Com-

munal cabinets, on the other hand, would perpetuate communal distinctions. They will lead to an endless clamour, for all time to come, on the part of the various communities for greater and greater representation. The leader of the biggest political party in the legislature should be asked to take up the office of the Prime Minister, and he should be responsible, along with his entire Cabinet, to the legislature. A convention to the effect that the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister should belong to different communities seems to me to be absolutely beside the point.

#### CULTURAL RIGHTS

It is, however, on the cultural rights that we have got to lay a particular emphasis in India. Of course, we can say generally that there must be the freedom of religion, culture and language. the right of public meeting, association, freedom of expression subject to public order and morality, equality before law and equality of political right. But in view of the communal tension in our country we shall have to be more definite. The position is more or less identical with that of the Central European countries after the last Great War. So we can be guided to a very great extent by their example. From the point of view of minorities, the two constitutions from which we can draw the greatest amount of help are those of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Articles 110 to 116 of the Polish constitution and Articles 128-1 and 130 to 132 of the Czechoslovak Constitution are particularly helpful. They deal with :

(1) Provision of educational facilities and use of minority languages as media of instruction ;

(2) Distribution of public funds for educational and charitable purposes, and the assuring of the right to establish, manage and control charitable educational, social and religious institutions ;

(3) Maintenance of family law and personal status in accordance with the usage of the groups concerned ; and

(4) Assuring of all roads, streets, water reservoirs, etc. maintained or licensed for public use to every citizen irrespective of race, religion or caste.

In view of conditions in our country particular emphasis will be laid, (1) on the assurance to minorities that there would be a very satisfactory provision of educational facilities for them of such a nature as to preserve their cultural identity, and (2) that every thing would be done by the state to protect their language and literature. Article 131 of the Czechoslovak Constitution says that in towns and districts where a considerable proportion of Czechoslovak citizens speak a language other than the Czechoslovak, facilities shall be guaranteed to enable the children of such citizens to receive instructions in their own language. In our country also such a safeguard will be absolutely necessary. In view of the fact that the Muslims have got a fear that there is a deliberate attempt being made in the country to destroy their language, viz. Urdu and of the equally strong

feelings on the part of the lovers of Hindi that their cultural heritage of centuries is being demolished by the national tide, a solution of the problem can be attempted on some such lines: *The Muslims and others whose mother tongue is Urdu shall be allowed to develop that language and literature. Similarly, in other parts of the country where Hindi is the mother tongue, complete liberty will be ensured to the people for the development of that language and culture. There shall also be a provision for the teaching of both the languages in all the schools. Even where the Muslims are in a minority some provision will have to be made, if they insist upon it, for the teaching of Urdu.*

Another point which arises in this connection is as to whether it would be enough to leave the supervision of these fundamental rights to the Supreme Court of India or they would have to be kept under the close supervision of some international body, like the United Nations Organization and the World Security Council. As is commonly known, the minority treaties of the European countries were kept after the first Great War under the supervision of the League of Nations. It is difficult to find out what would be the Muslim reaction to such a proposal, but I feel that if it is decided to create some kind of international body or to adopt some body already in existence for the supervision of the safeguards it will be making the whole thing very complicated and confusing. Firstly, how shall we bring the international body in exis-



tence, or, if there is already some such body in existence, how shall we invite it to be our patron saint? I have personally not much faith in either international arbitration or international supervision or control. The world is too much guided by power politics to deal fairly or justly or even honestly with any problem. All international organizations seem to be doomed. I do not discourage the idea of India having strong connections with foreign powers but I do not think that we have to depend on some foreign country or a group of foreign countries for the solution of our internal problems. For good or ill, we have to solve them ourselves. I therefore think that the constitutional machinery to carry out and safeguard these fundamental rights should be purely Indian and I think that the Supreme Court can admirably do the job.

The fact that these minorities' treaties failed in Europe should also be an object lesson for us. It will not be enough to draw up a list of fundamental rights and to incorporate it in the constitution. What is absolutely necessary is that they must be carried out in the proper spirit. It has to be kept in mind that there are two important facts which cannot be ignored in framing and execution of these fundamental rights. Attention to these points was pointedly drawn by Ismet Pasha at the Lausanne Conference. These two facts, according to Ismet Pasha, are (1) the external political factor, consisting of the desire nourished by certain powers to interfere in the internal affairs of

the country under the pretext of protecting minorities, and (2) the internal political factor i. e., the desire of the minorities to liberate themselves in order to constitute independent states. These two factors are very closely connected with each other. The interested foreign powers generally encourage the minorities to create disturbances against the state and then they interfere with the pretext of protecting them but their real desire is always to weaken the state. What happened in Czechoslovakia in 1938 and 1939 amply bears out the fears of Ismet Pasha expressed fifteen years earlier. The Sudetan Germans were encouraged by the Nazis to create disturbances against the Czechoslovak Government. It was under the instigation provided to them by the Nazi Government of Germany that they rose in revolt against their own Government. But this merely gave a handle to the German Nazi Government to interfere in the affairs of Czechoslovakia and finally to annex her. There is this danger also in handing over our minority problem to foreign powers. No disinterestedness can be expected from any one of them. We have also to deny England all opportunity of interfering in our affairs in the name of the minority problem. One of the outstanding weaknesses of the Cripps' Offer was that Britain was to continue to have a right of intervening in the future constitution of India in the name of protecting her racial and religious minorities.

The Sapru Committee also has faith in the inclusion of fundamental rights. They

suggested the protection of individual liberties, political and civil, and full religious toleration including non-interference in religious beliefs, practices and institutions and protection to language and culture of all communities. I wish that the Sapru Committee had laid down more specifically the rights which are to be guaranteed to Indian minorities particularly to the Muslims. It has looked at the problem more from the humanitarian than from the communal point of view. Finally, the question arises as to how the safeguards have to be executed. The Sapru Committee have suggested the idea of Minorities Commissions, but these Minorities Commissions can only be advisory bodies. The real power will be legal and that can be exercised only by the judiciary. It can therefore be laid down that so far as the execution of fundamental rights of the minorities is concerned, the federal judiciary will play the most important part. It will be the federal judiciary which will 'stand guard over fundamental rights and the communal settlement and adjudicate disputes that may arise about the limits of jurisdiction between the Union and the component units'. The Federal Supreme Court will be our final arbitral body.

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Need for Cultural Integration

#### EDUCATION AND SOCIAL REFORM

Constitutional devices and political settlement will go a long way towards the improvement of relations between the various communities of India and creating the proper atmosphere for the working of democracy, but they will not be enough. They can solve the present problem but they cannot take account of the future. It will be necessary to build up in the country an atmosphere of goodwill, peace and contentment. We have to ensure that we are able to establish a 'government of the people' which is really speaking a 'government for the people'. We have to see that the majority is not carried away by the lust of power and the minority is not allowed to develop a perverted inferiority complex growing into a sadist psychology. For bringing such an atmosphere in the country it will be necessary to take up the problem of education. In fact, the whole future of democracy depends upon education : without the foundations of education the edifice of democracy will simply not stand. What are the educational conditions in the country today ? Literacy is confined to 10 % of the total population. This is what the British rule has achieved during a period of 150 years ! As a writer puts

it, "a system of government which makes this possible calls for early revision into conformity with modern requirements". Extension of franchise without education, as has been the case in our country, will simply lead to nothing or to worse than nothing. It will provide occasions, as it has provided in our country, for demagogic leaders to inflame the sentiments of the masses for the sake of their narrow political organizations. A widening of the franchise is necessary. But it should come only in the wake of a still more rapidly growing education.

Education, really speaking, is the basis of democracy. Unless the people of a democratic state are educated, they cannot solve the political problems which they have got to face and properly acquit themselves in the control of the political power which they have got to share. But education does not mean merely literacy. There should be the education of the right type. If education is not able to inculcate feelings of toleration and respect, and develop a man's capacity for understanding another man's point of view it means nothing. Education in democracy must be the 'education of understanding which enables us to appreciate with sympathetic discernment how it is that people come to hold erroneous opinions and perhaps reveal in their errors some elements of truth'. Such a faculty of understanding can be developed only by education.

It will be necessary to point out some of the characteristics of education of the democratic type. The first distinction that Lennard makes

between democratic and totalitarian education is that whereas the first emphasises the education of reason which leads to diversity of opinion and the education of sympathetic understanding which promotes toleration and creates a sense of unity underlying all differences, the latter puts the inculcation of orthodox faith, the stimulation of mass emotion and the development of a sense of unity which is based on intolerance and intensified by common hatred of some chosen foe. Another difference that we find is that in totalitarian states a much greater attention is paid to the physical side of education than to its intellectual or emotional or cultural side. The favourite ideal before the Hitler Youth was to be "swift as a grey-hound, tough as leather, hard as Krupp's steel". Physical education need not be discouraged but it should not be the last word in education. The emphasis of democratic education will always be on reason which it seems to be much more necessary to cultivate than the body. Education should not start with any set ideals. Students are not to be developed into being 'good Nazis' or 'good Communists' or even 'sound Democrats'. What is necessary is to develop their human qualities. They have to grow into good human beings, free to hold and express opinions but always willing to understand another man's point of view.

A greater emphasis is being paid these days on the teaching of social sciences. A world orientation of education is advocated. Facts of

geography, economics or history are to be taught in world perspective. It is pointed out that the study of social sciences will go a long way to save the mind and the will from being paralysed by psychologized propaganda or mass emotions of the crowd. The next step, or rather an essential supplement, it is pointed out, will be a comparative study of religions, literatures, arts and other branches of culture on the part of the largest possible number of students and adults at every Indian University. "The familiarity of members of every denomination," writes Dr. Beni Prasad, "with the tenets and ideals of the others will be a great contribution to mutual understanding. The joint pursuit of traditional cultures and the modern social sciences may make Indian seminaries homes not only of catholic learning but also of vital movements in thought. It will exert a liberalising influence on religion, politics and every other department of life. It will serve to deepen the sense of citizenship."<sup>1</sup> Together with social sciences an equally great emphasis has to be laid on imaginative literature and fine arts. It is through imaginative literature that we can have a very sympathetic understanding of our fellow men, but nothing is able to create that bond of unity which fellowship in the love of music, vocal or instrumental, is likely to bring into existence. As Mr. Lennard points out, "Musical capacity cuts across all divisions of political opinion and social class, and the tolerance and mutual understanding which are so necessary

1. Beni Prasad : *Hindu-Muslim Questions*, p. 104.

to the maintenance of democratic methods of government and the vitality of the democratic spirit will be deepened and strengthened if those who are opponents in politics sing Bach and Handel together in the same choral society."<sup>1</sup>

Another important essential of democracy is the spirit of social reform. Education and the movement of social reform must go hand in hand, because if education does not bring about an equalisation of opportunities for all and maximization of opportunities for each it will only create a spirit of social anarchy. Our social institutions have got to be rebuilt to suit the changing nature of our education. We cannot, on the one hand, develop education on right lines and on the other, retain antiquated customs and a mediaeval pattern of society. An impetus has to be given to the movement for improving the position of Indian women. The stigma of untouchability has to be washed off. Better houses and higher wages and decent working conditions are to be provided to the labourers. The caste system has to be rejuvenated or scrapped. Unless we have got a widespread movement of social reform together with universal education of much better type the foundations of democracy would continue to be threatened in our country.

### EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

But the greatest curse of India is poverty. For a time to come the only objective of all our tendencies in education and social reform will

1. Lennard : *Democracy*, p. 63.



be the removal of this poverty. Poverty is the main cause of the lack of both education and the spirit of social reform, but unless these tendencies are developed, it will be difficult to remove poverty. There is a vicious circle which has got to be broken, and can be broken only when it is simultaneously attacked from all sides. Our country is supposed to be predominantly agricultural—80 p.c. of our people live in villages and 90 p.c. of them have to depend, directly or indirectly on education—but our means of agriculture are antiquated and crude. A large part of our land, which can easily be brought under cultivation, is lying idle, and the land which is under cultivation today can be made to yield a produce several times of what it now yields, only if scientific methods can be used. Why is no attempt being made to adopt these methods? The Indians did not merely live on agriculture before the advent of the British, but had developed industries too. The Indian weavers alone met the major needs in cloth of the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. The British rule brought our industries to an end but today, when the end of the British rule is drawing near, it will be necessary to revive these industries, not in their old form, but in the light of new scientific discoveries. The revival of the industries will take place on different planes, some on large-scale, others on an average, still others on the basis of cottages. All this will require a knowledge of the latest arts and sciences. We will have to send our best students to foreign countries. We will

have to link up economics of industrialization with comprehensive schemes of rural uplift. Efforts will have to be made to relieve the soil of its burden, which has been accumulating upon it due to lack of industries. A large part of the village population has to be diverted from agriculture and absorbed in the various industrial enterprises. The wealth of the country will have to be reconciled with the well-being of the masses. The ideal for which we shall have to work will be that no able-bodied adult in the country will remain without employment.

Education and Social Reform can lead to an increase in the wealth and property of the nation, but unless there is a correct type of education and a true reform of our social values, economic equality cannot be established, and in the absence of this economic equality, any increase in the nation's wealth and prosperity will not only be useless but may even be dangerous. Our aim is not to make our rich richer and to teach our poor to live contented in their poverty. The more the hands of capitalism are strengthened, the more will democracy be exposed to danger. The people will have to keep a vigil not only on their political rights but also for maintaining their economic equality. Independence, whether political or economic, can be maintained only by keeping constantly awake. All our efforts in the direction of spreading education and the establishment of social equality will, therefore, have got to be linked up with the economic problems. If we

can think of looking at education in its two different aspects—one ordinary and the other specialised—we can lay down a sort of maxim that whereas our ordinary education will do its best to develop the tendencies of social reform, our students who have received specialized education will apply all their knowledge and skill towards evolving schemes for the economic reconstruction of the country. Science has brought about a fundamental change in our values of life. We have to depend for our industrial, agricultural as well as cultural progress, even for defence, on science. It will, therefore, be necessary for the Government to make the best possible arrangements for scientific research. It is only scientific research which will enable us to exploit the limitless natural resources of our country and to develop our wealth, as well as well-being, by harnessing the tremendous amount of hydro-electricity today lying idle in the meshes of our rivers and waterfalls.

### CREATION OF SOCIAL EQUALITY

It is only by a spread of education, inculcation of the spirit of social reform and the establishment of economic equality that we can think of creating an atmosphere in which social equality may be able to grow. With more work and more occasions for the different parts of society to come in closer contact with each other, the spirit of mutual understanding and regard will grow. The various individuals working in a factory do not normally divide

themselves into different groups according to their religion or caste, but solely according to their economic interests. A Hindu capitalist who enjoys life at the cost of the poor labourer's hard work is likely to be as much detested by a Hindu labourer as by a Muslim. Along with economic development, there will be a new stimulus to the growth of the co-operative societies. As these co-operative bodies develop, and the members of the different communities are drawn into them in ever-growing number, it will be natural for them to develop a spirit of co-operation and goodwill.

In fact, as poverty is retrenched, and miseries of poverty get reduced, the spirit of social co-operation will grow: a hungry man is ever ready to give or take life for a small piece of bread but a man who has enough to eat does not generally fight for small things. It is this economic helplessness which lies at the root of our communal jealousies of today. Our peasants, petty shop-keepers, government servants, are so much obsessed today with the problem of bread, and our nerves have become so sensitive and our power of reasoning so dull, that even a false alarm to the effect that our small piece of bread is likely to be taken away from us makes us almost mad. If the field of employment had not been so narrow, and if our educated middle class, from which generally a lead has come for all our national movements, had not been so utterly dependent on government jobs, I am convinced that the history of Hindu-Muslim relations would have been very different today.

If we analyse our current politics, whether national or local, we can easily see that the main cause of most of our conflicts is economic. One can, therefore, lay it down with a certain amount of definiteness that as soon as new industrial and commercial enterprises crop up, and the old professions get rejuvenated by the help of new scientific implements, our entire social structure will change. One direct result of these economic trends will be to reduce the importance of that mediaevalistic feudalism and landlordism, which has lost the capacity of keeping the Hindu and the Muslim reconciled with each other, and to increase both the strength and the number of the middle classes, on the one hand, and to improve the condition of the poor, on the other. Our middle classes will then be completely free from that fear of unemployment which lies at the root of our communal differences of today, and the lower classes will also so transform their position by dint of administrative efficiency, if possible, as a result of a revolution, if necessary, —that it will not have to depend on anyone for its daily needs. Under those changed circumstances, the communal misunderstandings will automatically melt away. Each one of us will then have his gaze fixed, not on the ugly relics of the past but on the lofty dreams of the future.

### PROBLEM OF A NATIONAL LANGUAGE

Language plays a very important part in the national life of a country. It is the vehicle of

ir thoughts. It not only enables a man to communicate his every-day needs to his fellow-men; it also expresses his depth of institution, his flight of imagination and the width of his sentiments. Language is thus linked up with the national life. It is also a symbol of that life; it is in the rise and fall of a language that we can read the story of the rise and fall of the nation. Whenever the national life is full of vigour and promise, the language becomes simple, direct, classical and full of meaning; when it is on the downward track, the language also loses its force and grandeur. A literature which has to depend on such a lack-lustre language naturally begins to decay, and the mainsprings of the national life gradually begin to dry up. In fact, language is the only correct index of the true condition of affairs in a country. "Let the words of a country", wrote Milton, "be in part handsome and offensive in themselves, in part debased by wear and wrongly uttered, and what do they declare, but, by no light indication, that the inhabitants of that country are an indolent, idly-yawning race, with minds ready long prepared for any amount of servility? On the other hand we have never heard that any empire, any state, did not at least its flourish to a middling degree as long as its own liking and care for its language lasted". In the words of Pandit Nehru, "A living language is a throbbing, vital thing, ever changing, ever growing and living with the people who speak and write it".

The problem of language is of special importance for a country which is on the thresh-

hold of a new life. Language is one of those essential elements which go to strengthen the feelings of nationalism. It is very difficult for a nation to make much progress in life, unless it has a common language, which might be able to express the common needs of the whole country, and which might be understood by the larger part of its population. The more the number of languages in a country, and the more the distance between one language and another, the more difficult it becomes for national unity to be forged. The problem of languages is also one of those problems which have gone to complicate still further the already complicated problem of nationalism in India. Our country is like a continent, where several dozens of languages are spoken, and each of them has got several forms. In Northern India alone, besides Hindi and Urdu, there are Bengali, Marathi and Gujrati, each one of which is spoken by tens of millions of people. Besides these, there are Oriya, Assamese, Panjabi and Pushto. In South India, there are Tamil, Telugu, Malayam, Kanarese, etc. It is on account of this multiplicity of languages that it becomes so difficult for a message to be quickly flashed to the different parts of the country. The languages of South India cannot be used in a public meeting in the north. It is not very easy even for a Hindi-speaking man to follow Gujrati, Marathi or Bengali. A Bengali will not find his language of much help, while touring in Gujrat, and a man who knows Marathi alone will find himself in hot waters

anywhere outside the limits of Maharashtra.

It is on account of this multiplicity of languages and their diversity from each other that English has occupied such an important place in our national life. For a long time it has been used as a *lingua indica* by our educated classes. It is through this language that a Punjabi can make himself understood by another educated man, whether he is a Bengali or a Madrasi. It has been an important vehicle for the growth of our political consciousness. The stirring speeches of Surendra Nath Banerji, the studied talks of Shri Gokhale, the main trends of Gandhiji's thought and the brilliant analysis of world-forces by Jawaharlal Nehru, have all come to us through the medium of the English language. Even to-day, a good deal of the work of the Indian National Congress is carried on in English. But this is not a healthy sign. We cannot think of political freedom as long as we continue to be culturally enslaved. In that case, however well organized and independent our machinery of administration might be, we shall find ourselves like infants wrapped up in the apron-clothes of the English culture. We shall be like persons who have been set free but who find that, as a result of a prolonged habit of inaction, they have lost their power of movement. On the other hand, the day we are able to discover a national language for ourselves, and make it resplendent with our joys, our aspirations and our dreams we shall find freedom herself knocking at our doors.

In spite of this diversity of languages in India



the problem of a national language seems to be easy at first sight. There is now hardly any difference of opinion left on the question, that the honour of becoming our national language will go to the language which is at present spoken in the large parts of northern India and which is known as Hindi or Urdu, according to the proportion of the Sanskrit and Persian and Arabic words contained by its particular phase, and is written in Devanagiri or Persian script, according to the same basis. For sometime the Bengalis opposed the claims of the language of Northern India to be acknowledged as the national language. The feeling exists to some extent even to-day but it never had any strong basis. The Bengalis claimed the position of a *lingua indica* for Bengali on the ground that it had the best literature in the country, and had produced writers like Bankim Chandra, Rabindranath and Sarat Chatterji, an honour which Hindi or Urdu could not have claimed. But the literary height attained by a language cannot be the measure of its claims for being accepted as the national language. If that were so, even Marathi and Gujrati could have claimed, at least some years back, to have possessed more advanced literatures than Hindi. And if the literary height is to be taken as the only test for a language to be recognized as the national language, why should we not think of French or Russian, rather than Bengali, as our national language? In fact, the position of a national language can be attained only by the language which is most widely understood

in the country, and which is also easy to learn and to teach.

The main question before us is not of deciding as to which of the innumerable Indian languages we have to select as our national language. The verdict has already been given in favour of Hindi or Hindustani (which may be called Urdu also). The main problem before us is as to which form of this language we shall select. We come across various shades of Hindi or Hindustani as we move from Punjab to Bihar or from Kashmir to Central Provinces. The language which the common people of Lahore and Amritsar use contains a large number of Persian and Arabic words. The language spoken at Delhi and its neighbouring parts is also under the influence of Persian but the influence is not so deep. As we move towards Cawnpore we find a larger intermingling of Sanskrit words, and as we go to Allahabad or Benares, we find the language becoming almost completely Sanskritised. It is only with difficulty that a man living in Patna can follow the language of another coming from Rawalpindi, and yet both of them speak one and the same language!

I am speaking of the language of the common people and not of the language of literature. Unfortunately, there exists in our country a wide gulf—which is daily growing wider—between the language of the people and the language of literature. From the point of view of literature, two separate languages have side by side in Northern India. They :

and Hindi. Both of them have evolved separate and exclusive spheres of their own. They are both growing within these narrow spheres: the *litteratur* of the one draw their inspiration from the life and culture of Arabia and Persia, and the creative artists of the other make frantic efforts to go to the fountain-head of the ancient Aryan culture. The above statement applies to the main currents of both Urdu and Hindi literatures. There is a section of writers in both the languages which is keeping aloft its banner of revolt against these putitanical and separatist movements.

### HINDI *versus* URDU

Among the early protagonists of Hindi prose, the names of Munshi Sadasukh Lal, Insha Alla Khan, Sadal Misra and Lalluji Lal may be mentioned. Of these, Sadal Misra and Lalluji Lal had worked at the Fort William College of Calcutta under the guidance of Gilchrist. All these writers wrote in a language which was more or less Sanskritised. This is generally attributed to the policy of favouring the Hindus which the British Government was following at this time. The Hindi which is being propagated today, it is pointed out, was consciously created by the British. Nothing of the type had existed before. Many scholars have taken this view. It has been frequently expounded by them that the Sanskritised Hindi of today is not more than 140 years old, and that the language current in the country before the period was a Persianised one. This, however,

does not appear to be a historical truth. The philologist will tell us that the language of the common people in our country throughout the Muslim period, in spite of being full of Arabic and Persian words, had its roots deep into the Sanskrit language, from where it drew its main sustenance. What these writers say of the Indian masses was true only of that section of the Indian society which was in close contact with the Muslim administration and culture. The bulk of the Indian people, including both Hindus and Muslims, used a Sanskritized language.

Let us try to look at the problem from an objective point of view. The European missionaries, who proved to be the pioneers of modern Hindi prose, were mainly interested in religious propaganda. They could have accepted only that language through which they could reach the masses, and from the very fact that they selected a Sanskritised language it is clear that it was this language which was then popular among the masses. The common people certainly used a large number of Persian and Arabic words and a still larger number of words belonging to local dialects, in their daily course, but the very manner in which our national life, in general, and our Hindi literature, in particular, have grown, encouraged the tendency of leaving out Persian and Arabic words, on the one side, and the words from the village dialects, on the other. By the time that our Modern Indian Renaissance began, the Muslim culture which had flown into our country in

an incessant succession of streams from outside Islamic lands had become completely absorbed in the Indian culture of old and the ideology of separatism which had temporarily shot up during the latter days of the Mughal Empire, and was also partly responsible for its downfall, had completely died away. Under these circumstances, with a new upsurge of national life, it was quite natural for us to imbibe the tendency—confirmed and re-emphasised by the Orientalists—of going back to those roots of our culture which had grown on the banks of the Ganges and the Jumna and which had flourished in the form of Upanishadic thought long before we had come in contact with the Muslims. It was this tendency which found expression in the gradual Sanskritisation of Hindi.

When we look at other Indian languages, we shall find that this tendency is not confined to Hindi only. In fact, with the single exception of Urdu, all the Indian languages of today are becoming more and more Sanskritized. Ninety-one percent of the Indian people speak languages which depend on Sanskrit for their sustenance. What we must be very clear about is that there is no narrow communalism behind it. The tendency to go back to the past, as pointed out in an earlier chapter, is the common characteristic of renaissance everywhere. In Europe, it aroused a love for the past and brought in its wake an indifference to religion. In India too, this tendency was inspired by a love of the past. It had nothing to do with communalism or religiosity of the people. In the words of Syt.

K.M. Munshi, "In every province there developed an attraction for the Sanskrit language and literature. In every province there came forward a section of people, which took up the task of reorganising literature through the medium of Sanskrit. This section purified the region of the national language by innundating it with the Ganges of Sanskrit literature. The language became Sanskritised, mature, beautiful. The splendour of the creative imagination of Kalidasa and Bana began to enrich and embellish the provincial languages." The new awakening affected the Muslim society later, and in a different manner. The fundamental tendency was the same in both cases—that of revivalism, a return to the ancient past. But the objectives were different. Whereas the Hindu society had the vision of the Upanishadic era, the old glory of Arabia and Persia inspired the Muslim. Neither society had yet seen glimpses of nationalism.

The currents of new life thus grew in two separate channels in the Hindu and the Muslim societies. The movement which Ram Mohan Roy had created in Bengal under the name of Brahmo Samaj spread to Maharashtra in the form of Prarthna Samaj. Beginning with small religious institutions, this vast movement of awakening spread to the entire Hindu society through Arya Samaj and other social reform movements and was given a nationalist turn by Vivekanand and the Bengal revolutionaries. The awakening in the Muslim society, on the other hand, began with Syed Ahmad of Bareilly,

who had studied his religious books with Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi. Syed Ahmad's movement, which was wrongly called 'Wahabi' later on, advocated a return to the Islamic traditions of old in their pure and undiluted form. Syed Ahmad's appeal, based on 'The Ways of the Prophet' (Tariqah-i-Muhammad), was both to the educated and the illiterate classes. After his death, the movement spread all over Bengal, Punjab and Hyderabad. Syed Ahmad's personality also had a deep and abiding influence over the entire movement. Solemn, quiet and modest, he reminds us of the Prophet. His teaching was based on 'Tauhid', or unity of Godhead. He opposed the worship of *pirs* and other such practices. His appeal to return to the true principles of Prophet had its influence on the daily life of the village Mohammedans too, and inspired in them a new wave of awakening. The credit of accelerating the pace of Muslim social reform, however, goes to Sir Syed Ahmad of Aligarh. By opening the Anglo-Mohammedan College of Aligarh, he further paved the way to the progress of the Indian Muslims.

And since each of these societies, vibrating with new hopes and dreams, needed a language for its self-expression, with the greatest ease and with all spontaneity, without any clash or conflict, Hindi and Urdu, the two forms of one and the same language, became the media of these two waves of social awakening, and since both of these societies were inspired by a desire to return to the past, Hindi became more and more Sanskritised and Urdu more and more

Persianised. Again, in words of Syt. Muns "The evolution of Sanskritic literary Hindi and Persianised literary Urdu was a natural growth in which neither hostility nor communalism entered in the earlier stages. It was not easy to arrest this growth. If a Hindi writer wrote love lyric or a historical romance he could only seek inspiration from Jayadev, Vyas or Valmiki; if a Muslim writer pursued the literary art, to whom would he go, in the ordinary course, except to Sadi and Hafiz?"

The separate social progress of the Hindus and the Muslims was bound to have its influence on the forms of Hindi and Urdu. There is nothing intrinsically wrong about the current of awakening dividing itself in two different channels—provided they are willing to work hand in hand in the field of national life. A social movement is a wave of internal reform in a particular society. All these various progressive currents of thought can have only one aim—particularly in a country where nationalism has to fight a life and death struggle against the domination of an alien culture—namely, that of harnessing all their energy for the growth of nationalism. As long as they do not forget their aim, they should be welcomed. They are bound to strengthen the national life. And, as long as these two currents have a healthy flow, the difference in the expression—language—need not frighten us.

But in our country, the forces of decentralization are working side by side with forces of national unity. Hence the need for eternal



watchfulness and perpetual effort. There were keen social divisions between the Hindus and the Muslims, before the British came, and there were differences between Hindi and Urdu too, but in the political field, both Hindus and Muslims worked hand in hand, and the lovers of Hindi always tried to learn Urdu and similarly the advocates of Urdu were anxious to learn Hindi. But today, thanks to the presence of the third party, these differences of society and language have begun to pollute our national life too. This accounts for the great amount of misunderstanding on the question of language. But, in Pandit Nehru's words, "the tendencies working for synthesis are so strong that they cannot be checked by individuals". I am one of those, who can visualise the gleam of the coming morning in the dead darkness of midnight (because after all the night will have to end!). I am looking forward hopefully towards that life which pulsates in these two societies even when they are at daggers-drawn at each other. However apart they may be thrown from each other, I am sure, they will meet some day on the common-ground of nationalism, and with that national synthesis, the difference between Hindi and Urdu too will disappear, and out of their fusion will grow a powerful language. That will be the breaking of a new era in the history of our nationalism. However impossible such a hope may appear to be in today's atmosphere of mutual distrust, it is as true as the purity and sharpness of a flame of fire.

## A FEW MISUNDERSTANDINGS CLEARED

The idea of Hindustani has shocked the lovers of Urdu. They are afraid that if a common national language is brought into existence it will mean an end of the purity of their language. But this fear is more imaginary than real. There is nothing but misunderstanding behind it. It is true that Urdu, like Hindi, will serve as a feeder to our national language. But this will not stop the progress of Urdu. Just as we cannot imagine a national language for India without a full contribution of Urdu towards its making, we cannot also think of Urdu developing itself without keeping itself in close contact with the national language of the country. It cannot hope to grow to its destined heights by merely depending on Persian and Arabic. Having its roots deep in the Indian soil, it is only from this soil that it can draw its nourishment. Unless its roots are able to absorb and assimilate this sap of life there is every danger that they will dry up and wither away. If we do not find the Urdu literature making that rapid progress today which Bengali, Marathi, Hindi and Gujrati are making, it is largely due to the fact that Urdu has cut itself away from the main currents of the national life. We who want to bring back Urdu like a prodigal son in the wide family of the national language are as anxious for the future of Urdu as for the future of the Nation, since we know that the two questions are closely inter-linked.

Urdu has developed as a separate language

and will continue to develop as a separate language for many more years to come. We cannot think of bringing it to an end. It will be an excellent medium of our contact with the Muslim countries. Whatever is best in the Islamic culture will be made easily available to us through the medium of Urdu. I cannot think of the development of our national language or the progress of the nation without the growth of Urdu.

In fact, there is no conflict between Hindi and Urdu. It has come into existence for a very short period due to some misunderstandings, and its disappearance would not only be necessary but perfectly natural too. "The real conflict", as Gandhiji wrote, "is not between Hindi and Urdu but between Hindustani and English. That is a tough conflict. I am really very much anxious about that. There is no basis for any misunderstanding between Hindi and Urdu...Hindi and Urdu should be taken to be the feeders for bringing Hindustani into existence.....Hindi will be mostly confined to Hindus and Urdu to Mohammedans. There is no reason why there should be a conflict between these two sister-languages. Of course, there should always be a healthy spirit of competition....Under the able guidance of Maulvi Abdul Haq, the Osmania University is doing excellent service to Urdu. The University has prepared a very big lexicon in Urdu. Text-books have been prepared, and are being prepared in Urdu. And since this University is sincerely engaged in giving education through

Urdu, the Urdu language will naturally make progress. If the Hindi-speaking Hindus, in their communal fanaticism, refuse to take advantage of the growing literature in Urdu, it will be their fault...If the Muslims fail to benefit from the fruits of modest labour employed by the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, it will be their fault... I know that there are some people here who dream that there will be only Urdu or Hindi. But I believe that it is an unholy dream, and will always remain a dream. Islam has its own culture. Similarly, Hinduism also has its own culture. In the India of the future there will be a complete and a happy blending of both these cultures. When that auspicious time comes, Hindustani will be the common language of both Hindus and Muslims. But Urdu will continue to make progress even then with all its abundance of Persian and Arabic words, and Hindi will continue to grow with its treasure-house of Sanskrit words. The language of Shibli cannot die. But the merits of both will get merged in the Hindustani language." These words of Gandhiji ought to set at rest whatever fears and suspicions the lovers of Urdu have harboured for sometime regarding the question of the national language.

I feel sure that by becoming one of the important bases of the national language, Urdu will grow in importance. As far as technical words are concerned, both Arabic and Sanskrit can be used as reservoirs. A common national language cannot depend exclu<sup>vely</sup> on one

only. If we despise Arabic as a foreign language, we cannot also forget that Sanskrit too was never common among the masses, and those who are familiar with the spoken form of the Hindi language know full well that the Sanskrit words used in it have gradually changed their shape and form. It was because not only the Mohammedans but the common people also found it difficult to pronounce Sanskrit words. Even small words like 'gram' and 'varsha' have become 'gaon' and 'baras'. From this it is clear that Hindustani will not be in a position of depending on Sanskrit alone.

In fact, Sanskrit will not even be its main basis. Those who have begun using even simple words of ordinary use in their difficult original Sanskrit forms certainly do not care for the growth of a living popular language. Gandhiji also does not think it necessary for the national language to depend so utterly on Sanskrit. While replying to a letter from an Urdu writer, Syt. Munshi had written, that the Gujratis, Maharashtris, Bengalis and Keralites "have built up literary traditions in which pure Urdu elements are almost non-existent. If we take to Hindi in the very nature of things we will take to Sanskritic Hindi". Commenting on this, Gandhiji wrote, "In the first place, I know for certain that Gujrati, Marathi and Bengali all contain a considerable number of Persian words, and I am not prepared to admit that the Hindus of Gujrat and Bengal must Sanskritize their speech to come close to each other and to the Musalmans. Besides, it is not the 'pure Urdu

elements' with which we are concerned, but the living language and idioms of northern India. If this living language is taken as the basis for a common language, the Musalmans can co-operate effectively. A reversion to Sanskrit means that they and all their past services to Hindi, Bengali and Gujrati are to be passed over. To ask for co-operation from us under such conditions is nothing less than asking us to be accomplices in our own suicide".

We should, in fact, welcome the new life that is welling up in the respective fields of Hindi and Urdu, though it is likely to widen the gulf for the time being. Both Hindi and Urdu find themselves equally unable to cope with the modern scientific, political, economic, commercial and even cultural needs and are trying to adjust themselves to these needs, and have obtained some success also in their efforts. There is no reason why they should be jealous of each other. The writers of both are engaged in the gigantic task of making their language as rich as possible, but they will not succeed in their efforts as long as they go on purging the words of the other language because they do not suit the communal environments in which they are working. We need both, and we have to accept both. We should understand very clearly that the development of Hindi means the development of Urdu also, and that Hindi will be able to grow only when Urdu is developed. Both will have a tremendous influence over each other and will lead to an

enrichment of each other's vocabulary and thought.

It is quite possible that after sometime Urdu may not be able to maintain a separate existence of its own and may lose itself in a full-grown national language. But it will be possible only when the national language will have the capacity of absorbing all the beauty and the glory of the Urdu language. Urdu will then have done its work. I quite realise that Urdu has done the great work of preserving the Islamic culture in India. That culture has now become so closely linked up with Urdu that unless it is either completely eliminated (which can be a madman's dream dreamt by madmen only) or completely absorbed (towards which Indian nationalism is moving), Urdu cannot be superseded. We have learnt a great deal from Islam, and have yet to learn a great deal more. I strongly feel that it is in order to make a very valuable addition to our national culture that we find an independent channel of Islamic culture in our country today. The day on which we shall be able to accept it with an open heart and make it a part and parcel of the future culture of India, its separate existence will no longer be rendered necessary. I have not the ghost of a doubt in my mind that such a day is not far off. A great culture is yet to be born out of a synthesis of the Indian and the Islamic cultures, which will raise out of sloth a tottering world. The forces that are working towards this Great Synthesis are so powerful that they cannot be checked by individuals.

The provincial languages have still less to fear from the development of a national language. They are not, like Urdu, the alter egos of Hindi. They have developed independently of Hindi, and a large number of factors have contributed towards their growth. India is a big country, and it is difficult for an universal language to be accepted by all its parts. She has always contained, and will continue to contain, a large number of allied languages. Their abolition will not be a very desirable affair. In fact, their prosperity would go to enrich the national culture. But this diversity can be of use only when we are able to keep a tight hold on the thread of the unity of national culture running through them all. In Syt. Munshi's words, "India's literature is one, because her traditions also are not variegated. The ignorant man, just as he, in his anxiety to count the innumerable stars of the sky, loses sight of their balanced movements, cannot also see the true unity of Indian literature on account of its large variety, different scripts and innumerable languages."

In our national language we shall be able to find a grand reflection of the national unity, but the multitudinous growth of Indian culture will not stop as soon as such a national language is formed. Due to its close contact with the national language, and through them with all the provincial languages, it will be in constant touch with the mainsprings of the national life. Culture always grows through mutual contacts. Syt. Munshi is perfectly correct when he says of the national language that "it is the



step-mother of the educated people." The persons who speak the various provincial languages will carry on their work through the medium of their own mother-tongue. They will develop their main literary themes through their own language. But as the sentiment of nationalism will grow, as science will bring the various parts of India closer to each other, as the traditions and life of the whole country get merged into one wide current, this language will become more and more powerful. But as far as eye can see, there seems to be no chance for the national language to take the place of provincial languages.

But what surprises one most is that even Hindi writers appear to be full of suspicion and forebodings at the growth of this national language. There is a section of writers in Hindi—which is gaining strength—which believes that if Hindustani is allowed to develop, it will mean an end of Hindi, and of Hindu culture. Hindu culture is not so weak and lifeless. If it could survive five hundred years of Muslim domination—in fact, was at the height of its glory under that domination—it is not likely to become extinct if it includes in its ever-growing vocabulary a few words of common use from Persian and Arabic. Regarding the question of maintaining the beauty of the Hindi language, I think that in its Hindustani form it will certainly grow ever more lovely; it will become mature and rich; the heaving waves of the cultural glory of the entire country will dash against its shores and

lay down their best at its feet, and, taking inspiration from it, will return to revitalize cultural life of their own provinces.

### LITERARY THEMES

We have to change the point of view of our literature today—and the form of language will automatically change with it. We have to bid adieu to all that literature which contains fairy-tales and the stories of kings. We have to widen the mental horizon of the artist. Unless his sympathy is not most comprehensive, his art will not possess depth and stability. In this age of democracy and socialism, the walls between bourgeois literature and the literature of the common people have to be demolished. The following words of Romain Rolland addressed to the creative artists of the world will be able to give a proper guidance to the writers of Hindi and Urdu. "The writers of today", writes Romain Rolland, "waste their energy in describing human rarities, or cases that are common enough in the abnormal groups of men and women living on the fringe of the great society of active, healthy, human beings. ....Leave them and go where there are men. Show the life of every day to the men and the women of every day; that life is deeper and more vast than the sea. The smallest among you bears the infinite in his soul. The infinite is in every man who is simple enough to be a man, in the lover, in the friend, in the woman who pays with her pangs for the radiant glory of the day of child-birth, in every man and

every woman who lives in obscure self-sacrifice which will never be known to another soul; it is the very river of life, flowing from one to another, from one to another and back again and round.....Write the simple life of one of these simple men. Write the peaceful epics of the days and nights following, one like to another, and yet all different, all sons of the same mother, from the dawning of the first day in the life of the world. Write it simply, as simple as its own unfolding. Waste no thought upon the word, and the letter, and the subtle vain researches in which the force of the artists of today is turned to nought. You are addressing all men; use the language of all men. There are no words noble or vulgar; there is no style chaste or impure; there are only words and styles which say or do not say exactly what they have to say."

It will be impossible to check the progressive trend in literature. In Dr. Zakir Husain's words, "The art of literature can no longer be confined to a narrow section of people. Language, above everything else, is a social affair. It serves as a link between man and man. It conveys the heart-beats of a man to another fellow-man.....As the writers feel greater need of being understood, and as more and more people try to understand them, the art of literature becomes simple and easy and is brought nearer to life. Those who are acquainted with the history of languages know full well that as the language progresses it comes more under the influence of those who listen

to it than of those who speak and write it..... Poetry alone might contain certain things which the writer says merely to remove a burden off his chest. He may try to do so by a sigh or an applause. But I think that even for this the poet needs some people who can understand him. A rare bird sometimes sits on the dry branch of a desolate tree, but most birds like to warble in the garden only."

Language, after all, is merely the index of the condition of art in a particular country in a particular age. If the art of a country cuts itself away from the mainsprings of a nation's life and becomes the exclusive concern of a class of neurotics, language will become complex and ambiguous. On the other hand, if the barriers between art and life are let down and the two are allowed freely to embrace each other, language also loses its frigidity and becomes a sincere representative of the common life of the common people, what it is expected to be. "It is a fine sort of fame", wrote Romain Rolland, castigating the French writers of his day, "that is won from self-amputation from life, so as to be unlike other men! Let all such artists perish. We will go with the living, be sucked at the breasts of the earth and drink in all that is most profound and sacred in our people, and all its love from the family and the soil....Let us avoid like the plague any artistic language that belongs to a caste like that of so many writers. We must have the courage to speak like men, and not like artists. We must draw from the common fund of all men, and unashamedly

make use of old formulae, upon which the ages have set their seal, formulae which the ages have filled with their spirit....The pyramids were not begun at the top...." Let our writers but follow the advice of this most powerful writer of the century, let them be true to life, let them be true to themselves, and the language-problems will automatically melt away.

One thing to be remembered about Hindustani is that it is not to be created but discovered. Its vocabulary already lies spread all over the country: it has only got to be pieced together. The written word has lost contact with the spoken word; that contact has to be restored and revitalized. It is an attempt at uniting tendencies which, under abnormal circumstances, had diverged from each other and taking the language back to the masses from where it grew. Like one of Molier's characters who discovered that he had been speaking prose all his life it might come as a discovery to many of us that we in Northern India have been using Hindustani for our daily needs and conversational purposes each day of our life and all day long. What we have to do is to bring literature closer to this language of our daily needs. If literature and life are brought into contact both have to gain immensely. This is, however, only one aspect of the problem. The other aspect is to make this language most widely understood throughout the country. In this manner the message emanating from the masses will reach its widest circulation among the masses.



tools and implements which are newly being invented, words which are not so difficult as those found in our Sanskrit and Arabic dictionaries. As a matter of fact, an easy method of giving the Hindustani form to these words of foreign origin which we want to take up is to give them currency among these people and then to accept the form which is accepted by them after sometime.

3. Then, we shall have to recover all those Persian and Arabic words which we have deliberately given up. Some of them we shall find being used by our villagers, as well as the labourers and artisans of the towns, and for others we shall have to go once more to the Urdu language. Dr. Rajendra Prasad advises us "to accept in Hindustani all those Arabic and Persian words which have been used by the better class of Hindi writers," and not to "exclude new words also simply because they are taken from a particular language. The only criterion that we have to apply to it is their capacity for gaining currency among the people." I completely endorse this view. Of course, we shall have to emphasise the fact that whatever words are taken from the Persian and Arabic languages should be subjected to the control of Hindustani grammar. The words coming from other languages automatically adjust themselves to the Hindustani grammar, but due to the similarity of syntax, the Urdu words have a tendency of sometimes creeping in with all their intricacies. This should be avoided. We should accept them only in the Hindustani form.

4. We shall also have to borrow from the provincial languages. It is true that, with the exception of Urdu, all our provincial languages have either been the offshoots of Sanskrit or have been under its strong influence, and possess almost the same vocabulary. But during the last several hundred years of independent development, each of them has invented or imbibed from various sources a large number of words which are peculiarly their own. We shall need many of them for the enrichment of our national language.

5. Above all, we shall have to depend on foreign languages too, particularly English. A large number of words in our national language have come in the wake of the British rule. We need not be over-anxious in giving them a quit-passport along with the British rulers. They have all become our own. But so far our contact with the West has been that of a slave with his master, and so we have only got certain words of common use. But a free India whenever it materialises—and I believe it will materialise sooner than most people think—will have an equal status with the West, and, then, while teaching a great deal to others, we shall also learn a great deal from them. We shall have to study at first hand the various western sciences, whether they are political or economical or cultural. In the sphere of science, we shall possibly have to take a large number of words from the West. Almost all the European countries, in spite of great differences of language, generally use the same scientific te



The above suggestions are bound to startle the advocates of purity in language. They will say that this will distort our language. They are also afraid that these changes in language, which seem to be arbitrarily imposed, will endanger their culture too. The advocates of both the Hindi and Urdu languages have freely expressed this fear. Like vested interests, they propose to retain their narrow, cribbed, and confined communal or provincial cultures. They are the victims of a misunderstanding that language and culture are so closely interwoven that they cannot be separated from each other. The Muslims have begun to look at Urdu as the symbol of Indian Islam, and so want to take it into the closest contact of other languages—Persian, Arabic etc.—which also give expression to the principles of Islam. They think that a process of making it simple will mean a set-back to their culture. On the other hand, the Hindus are anxious to make Hindi the guardian-angel of their own culture. But if we look at the matter deeply, we can see that culture and language are, after all, not so inseparable as they are generally supposed to be. In spite of there being a certain amount of cultural unity in all the European countries, each has a separate language of its own, and some of the smaller countries possess several languages! Switzerland has got four languages. In Canada and South Africa, all state-work is carried on in two languages. In our neighbouring country of Afghanistan too, in spite of the cultural unity being an undisputed factor, there

are two languages.

Unless we insist on taking culture in a very narrow sense, we can say that just as it is not necessary for marriage to be performed within the same *gotra*, it is also not necessary to keep the language, confined and pure, within its own narrow cell. Such movements, whether they exist in society or in language, are not indicative of a liberality of heart, and are definitely harmful. Orthodoxy can never help a language; all that it can do is to divert its sparkling channels of life into the desert-sands of death. This actually happened in the case of Sanskrit. Languages, as well as cultures, are the result of various influences. Some are more under the influence of external factors, others less. Sanskrit is not the pure language of the Aryans: it abounds in words of Dravidian origin. The Arabic is the combination of Greek, Persian and Iberian words. Hindi too is not a pure language. It has drawn its sustenance, on the one hand, from Sanskrit and has prospered, on the other, under the heavy showers of Persian and Arabic. The story is repeated in the case of all living languages of the world. A language is never spoiled by admitting words from other languages. It only becomes richer and stronger. If those words are taken out, it will begin to totter. A language is spoiled when the writer makes a shabby attempt at patching up incongruous words upon each other.

In fact, neither language nor culture can remain stationary. They are both eternally changing. With every gust of wind there is

some change. Our country too is passing through deep and fundamental changes. The reaction of the West, and the reaction against the West, are both, simultaneously and in full fury, affecting our culture of today. We have to face destruction as well as reconstruction: there are disruptive forces, and behind them there lurk strong links of unity. Our language and culture are constantly reacting to both these influences. Those of us who possess understanding can easily look beyond the small wheels of a vast machine, some of which are moving in one direction and some in another, and discern that big wheel which is always moving in a forward direction, and those of us who have the will to do so can even accelerate the speed of that big wheel.

The question of a word being indigenous or foreign should not be raised in the domain of language. In the words of Dr. Zakir Husain, "There are some gusts of wind from outside which burn away the harvest of life, but there are certain other breezes which give a new life to a failing crop. It is the height of folly and ignorance to think that they are both one and indistinguishable....Can the words which exist in the Hindustani language today serve us beyond the purpose of conversation and writing fables? The world is progressing every day. New things are being invented. New ideas have got to be expressed. New ideologies are growing. For all these things, ideas, ideologies, we want new words. Can we decide that we shall rest content with the words that we

possess today and turn and twist the same when we have got something new to say, or shall we be willing to forge new words or borrow them from outside? I think nobody has a right to check the growth of a language. When a new idea has to be expressed it will always need a new word." The only condition that we can impose is that these words, from whatever source they are picked up, should be such that they do not appear to be misfits in our national language.

### NEED OF A PLANNED EFFORT

This will, of course, require a planned effort. A collaboration of several writers of different provincial languages—of those who sincerely believe in a national language—will be necessary to work out the scheme. It will also require a central body, which will give direction to the whole work. Past record of work in this direction is far from satisfactory. The Hindustani Academy of Allahabad had a very limited scope of work—that of bringing Hindi and Urdu closer to each other—but it could not achieve a very great success. Its books and quarterly journal continue to be published in two separate languages. It might have helped in the creation of some literature in Hindi and Urdu but it has not led to the creation of Hindustani. The main cause of its failure lies in the fact that it merely tried to bring the two languages together from the top. In this connection we can again think of Romain Rolland's saying: "The pyramids were not begun at the

top." It, therefore, led to anything but unity. The Academy seems to have made no effort to take back both Hindi and Urdu to their common source, the language of the masses. Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Maulvi Abdul Haq also had evolved in August 1937, when they met in a meeting of the Bihar Urdu Committee, a common plan of taking the help of both Hindi and Urdu scholars in preparing a lexicon of Hindustani words. This had led to the creation of a Hindustani Committee but, as far as I am aware, it made no effort to catch hold of the thread of common man's life which binds these two languages. All these efforts were connected with Hindi and Urdu only, and paid no heed to the other provincial languages.

A big move in this direction was the establishment of Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad. This body was established at Indore in 1935, mainly due to the efforts of Syt. K. M. Munshi, on the occasion of the annual session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, presided over by Gandhiji. I had my own humble share in securing the co-operation of Syt. Prem Chand, the greatest writer of Hindi. Under the guidance of these two eminent literary figures from Gujrat and Northern India, the institution did some excellent work for two or three years, and then came to an abrupt end. It had aimed at emphasising that element of cultural unity which is finding expression in the literatures of the various provinces. Its primary aim was the development of the national literature: language was secondary to it. But this fine institution

ended in the mire of language controversies. Dominated by Syt. K. M. Munshi, its main emphasis was on a Sanskritised language: this Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad could not unfortunately cut itself away from that wave of cultural renaissance which is affecting our Hindu life today. It was this which created misunderstandings in the Muslim minds. An institution which had been brought into existence in order to emphasise the cultural unity of the entire nation could not have flourished in the teeth of Muslim opposition. It naturally collapsed. Syt. Munshi wrote somewhere that the country was not prepared for such a big experiment, that the time was not ripe for it. I strongly disagree from this view. I think that the Bhartiya Sahitya Parishad came to an end because of a failure on the part of its leaders to grasp a true conception of national culture, which might be equally acceptable to both the Hindus and the Muslims.

The scholars who may now think of taking part in a planned effort to evolve a national language for India will first have to free themselves from politics and communalism and the false lure of narrow cultures. Theirs will be an all-out effort in the direction of a cultural synthesis, in which each culture will have to contribute according to its capacity and each will be in a position to enrich itself by obtaining a great deal from others. They must all have a burning faith in Indian nationalism. The members of this committee should be men of weight, but they must also carry in their

heart a burning conviction that destiny has inextricably interwoven the Hindus and Muslims, like warp and woof, into a common pattern of life, and their mission is that of forging links of steel between millions of poor kisans and labourers—Hindus as well as Muslims—by means of language. Gandhiji once wrote : "The Hindustani culture of our times is yet in the making. Many of us are engaged in the task of evolving a common culture out of the various cultures which appear to be conflicting against each other. No culture which tries to cut itself away from others can live for a long time. There is no such thing as pure Aryan culture in India today." Those who believe in this new culture and its main elements alone should accept to work on this committee.

What shall this committee do? This is more than I can answer. It will, at any rate, prepare a dictionary of the Hindustani language. The idea of compiling a dictionary seems to find a general support among thinkers on the subject. Rajendra Babu supports it. Maulvi Abdul Haq came with one such scheme at the Nagpur session of the Bhartiya Sahitya Parishad. Others also favour it. In fact there are two kinds of dictionaries which are suggested to be compiled—one, philological, the other basic. Maulvi Abdul Haq's is a more comprehensive scheme regarding the philological dictionary. This dictionary might contain (a) all the Persian, Arabic and Urdu words which have passed into Hindi speech and literature, and (b)

all the Sanskrit and Hindi words which Urdu has adopted. This dictionary may, then, be placed before a representative body of Hindi and Urdu writers, after whose approval it may be published as a basis for the further development of a common language. And this body, or a committee nominated by it, may be made responsible for adding to it from time to time such Hindi and Urdu words and expressions as are deemed necessary for the growth of language and the expression of new ideas. Mohammad Din Tasir suggests that this Committee should consist of only those writers and scholars who possess the new outlook and that they should begin their work with a list of such basic words which are absolutely necessary for expressing our daily needs. The next step would be to ask three such Urdu-knowing members, who are completely innocent of Hindi but are fully in touch with the dialects of their villages, to make a list of all non-Persian words which they can understand and similarly to ask the Hindi-knowing members to make a list of non-Sanskrit words. These two lists would then be compared with the list of 'basic' words. If there are no words in the basic list which suitably express our fundamental ideas, words may be borrowed from both Hindi and Urdu. This would lead to the compilation of a 'basic' dictionary, which can be further evolved by taking words, on the one side, from folk-literature of the villagers and on the other, from high-class literature. After so many years of technical words, as well as of



various political ideologies, can be compiled, but there should be no departure from the original principles, namely that words should be taken from both Hindi and Urdu, they should be compared with those prevalent among the common people and if there are no such words which are in the daily use of the ordinary men, then words of both Hindi and Urdu should be adopted. Dr. Rajendra Prasad possibly wanted to bring about a synthesis of these two schemes when he suggested that the lexicon should contain the meaning of those Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic words which are used in Hindustani, and, then, out of them, two or three thousand simple words of common use should be selected, and they must be deliberately used in our educational institutions

### MOVEMENT FOR 'BASIC' HINDUSTANI

The movement of 'basic' Hindustani got a very enthusiastic supporter in Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Pandit Nehru seems to have been very much influenced by the movement of 'basic' English. The basic English contains, besides scientific, technical and commercial terms, about a thousand words. One who learns them can get a smattering knowledge of the English language. If a similar list of a thousand words can be compiled in Hindustani also, and if its grammar is made a little simpler, we can easily spread this language all over the country. But this list cannot be prepared off-hand. As in English, this work will require the collaboration of a host of scholars in our country also, and

they will have to select only those words which are most widely used. The evolution of basic Hindustani will undoubtedly be a great help in the spread of our national language.

I think that this work will have to be undertaken in two or more stages. The first stage will consist of an effort to discover a common ground between Hindi and Urdu. For this, we require a committee of nationalist, progressive (not necessarily 'progressivist') and young (those who have not only talent but energy and time also) writers of both Hindi and Urdu. This Committee should have a representative of the various shades of these two languages. The Urdu representatives have got to be taken from Lahore, Delhi and Hyderabad (possibly Lucknow also), and the Hindi members from Bihar, Eastern U. P., Western U. P., and Central India (which should include both Rajasthan and Central Provinces). All these seven (or eight) members should be persons who are in living contact with the villages and who are conversant with some of the village-dialects in their area. These people will prepare a basic, workable vocabulary of Hindustani by learning which any one whose mother-tongue is not Hindi, will be able to express his daily needs and requirements in Hindi. But the work must not stop there. A nation on the march, with new imaginations and new dreams floating before its mind's eye, and vibrating with the thrill of new ambitions, cannot express the height and the fullness of

its life in a thousand words. Even the movement of basic English, as far as I see, has not proved very successful. A knowledge of this basic Hindustani will be essential for the lower classes of our schools and for those who cannot spend much time for learning the national language, but it will only be the basis of our main task, which is the reconstruction of the national language. This Committee will then take up representatives from the various provinces. Three representatives may be taken from Bengal, Gujrat and Maharashtra and four from South India. The Committee will then proceed to select a thousand words which express our daily needs and which are commonly used by all the provincial languages.

This will form the second stage of the work. By the time that this stage is attained, the sphere of work will become very extensive. These scholars will then have to take up the work of educating the public, by means of journals and books, in a basic Hindustani which will not only touch the common ground of Hindi and Urdu but which will form the basis of all the languages in the country. They will also have to entrust to various sub-committees consisting of scientists, economists, politicians etc. the task of compiling dictionaries containing technical terms in these various sciences. Such dictionaries can be published only after they receive the approval of this bigger Committee, which will also have to make efforts to get these terms accepted by all the provincial

languages. It is quite possible that these dictionaries might contain a fairly large number of foreign words.

All along, the Committee will have to keep itself in close touch with *kisans*, labourers and artisans. But it will have to make an effort to preserve intact the element of refinement in language. Language ought to be simple but full of meaning. In syt. Munshi's words, "Every language has two forms, one for everyday use in life and the other for expressing the flight of imagination and thought. The first form should be such as to be accessible to everyone, and the other also should be able to express and expound the thought and its flight". Our national language will have to be so comprehensive, and at the same time so flexible, that it should be available on one side for folk-literature and may serve, on the other, as a suitable vehicle for the expression of the highest thought. The ordinary villager should be able to express in it his daily needs, and the greatest scientist to convey his highest researches to his fellow-men. Any first rate language, must possess this flexibility. Above all, the basic beauty and refinement that our language possesses today has also got to be maintained. This will naturally make our task extremely difficult. But great tasks have never been easy. If we can build up our national language on these lines, interweaving our communal characteristics with our provincial patterns of culture and creating out of them all a mosaic of unity, I am confident, we

can so build up our national life that the main problem of our country, that of division and disunity, will disappear within the twinkling of an eye and the passage from authoritarianism to democracy will be easy and smooth.

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## APPENDIX I

### The Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League

*March 23, 1940.*

"Resolved that it is the considered view of this Session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz. that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent unit shall be autonomous and sovereign.

"That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in these units and in these regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them; and in other parts of India where the Musslamans are in a minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

"This Session further authorizes the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary".

## APPENDIX II

### The 'August Offer'

*Statement issued by the Governor-General of India with the authority of His Majesty's Government on August 8, 1940.*

India's anxiety at this moment of critical importance in the world struggle against tyranny and aggression to contribute to the fall to the common cause and to the triumph of our common ideals is manifest. She has already made a mighty contribution. She is anxious to make a greater contribution still. His Majesty's Government are deeply concerned that unity of national purpose in India which would enable her to do so should be achieved at as early moment as possible. They feel that some further statement of their intentions may help to promote that unity. In that hope they have authorised me to make the present statement.

Last October His Majesty's Government again made it clear that Dominion Status was their objective for India. They added that they were ready to authorise the expansion of the Governor-General's Council to include a certain number of representatives of political parties, and they proposed the establishment of a consultative committee. In order to facilitate harmonious co-operation it was obvious that some measure of agreement in the provinces between major parties was a desirable pre-requisite to their joint collaboration at the Centre. Such agreement was unfortunately not reached, and in the circumstances no progress was then possible.

During the earlier part of this year I continued my efforts to bring political parties together. In these last few weeks, I again entered into conversations with prominent political personages in British India and the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, the results of which have been reported to His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government have also seen the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha.

It is clear that the earlier differences which had prevented the achievement of national unity remain unbridged. Deeply as His Majesty's Government regret this, they do not feel that they should any longer, because of these differences, postpone the expansion of the Governor-General's Council, and the establishment of a body which will more closely associate Indian public opinion with the conduct of the war by the Central Government. They have authorised me further to establish a War Advisory Council which would meet at regular intervals, and which would contain representatives of the Indian States and of other interests in the national life of India as a whole.

The conversations which have taken place and the resolutions of the bodies which I have just mentioned make it clear, however, that there is still in certain quarters doubt as to the intentions of His Majesty's Government for the constitutional future of India, and that there is doubt, too, as to whether the position of minorities, whether political or religious, is sufficiently safeguarded in relation to any constitutional change by the assurance already given. There are two main points which have emerged. On those two points His Majesty's Government now desire me to make their position clear.

The first is as to the position of minorities in relation to any future constitutional scheme. It has already been made clear that my declaration of last October does not exclude examination of any part either of the Act of 1935 or of the policy and plans on which it is based. His Majesty's Government's concern that full weight should be given to the views of the minorities in any revision has also been brought out. That remains the position of His Majesty's Government.

It goes without saying that they could not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a Government.

The second point of general interest is the machinery for building within the British Commonwealth of Nations a new constitutional scheme when the time comes. There has been very strong insistence that the framing of that scheme should be primarily the responsibility of Indians themselves, and should originate from Indian conceptions of the social, economic and political structure of Indian life. His Majesty's Government are in sympathy with that desire, and wish to see it given the fullest practical expression subject to the due fulfilment of the obligation which Great Britain's long connection with India has imposed upon her and for which His Majesty's Government cannot divest themselves of responsibility.

It is clear that a moment when the Commonwealth is engaged in a struggle for existence is not one in which fundamental constitutional issues can be decisively resolved. But His Majesty's Government authorise me to declare that they will most readily assent to the setting up after the conclusion of the war with the least possible delay of a body representative of the principal elements in India's national life in order to devise the framework of the new constitution, and they will lend every aid in their power to hasten decisions on all relevant matters to the utmost degree.

Meanwhile they will welcome and promote, in any way possible, every sincere and practical step that may be taken by representative Indians themselves to reach a basis of friendly agreement, firstly, on the form which the post-war representative body should take, and the methods by which it should arrive at its conclusions, and secondly upon the principles and outlines of the constitution itself.

They trust, however, that for the period of the war (with the Central Government reconstituted and strengthened in the manner I have described and with the help of the War Advisory Council) all parties, communities and interests will combine and co-operate in making a notable Indian contribution to the victory of the world cause which is at stake. Moreover, they hope that in this process new bonds of union and understanding will emerge and thus pave the way towards the attainment by India of that free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth which remains the proclaimed and accepted goal of the Imperial Crown and of the British Parliament.

### APPENDIX III

#### The Cripps' Proposals

"His Majesty's Government having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of promises made in regard to the future of India have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way



subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs. His Majesty's Government, therefore, make the following Declaration:—

(a). Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities steps shall be taken to set up in India in manner described hereafter an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India.

(b) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for participation of Indian States in the Constitution-making body.

(c) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed subject only to:—

- (i) The right of any Province of British India, that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides.

With such non-acceding Provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

- (ii) The signing of a Treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the Constitution-making body. This Treaty will cover all necessary matter arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands; it will make provision, in accordance with, undertakings given by His Majesty's Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities; but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other Member States of the British Commonwealth.

Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its Treaty arrangements so far as this may be required in the new situation.

(d) The Constitution-making body shall be composed as follows unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities:—

Immediately upon the result being known of Provincial Elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower Houses of Provincial Legislatures shall as a single electoral college proceed to the election of the Constitutionmaking body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about 1/10th of the number of the electoral college.

Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as

in the case of representatives of British India as a whole and with the same powers as British Indian members.

(c) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new Constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world-war effort but the task of organising to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India."

In announcing this scheme, Sir Stafford made it clear that it was only a proposal submitted to the leaders of Indian opinion by the War Cabinet and that its publication was not the publication of a declaration by His Majesty's Government but only a declaration which they would be prepared to make if it met with sufficiently general and favourable acceptance from the various sections of the Indian people.

## APPENDIX IV

### The C. R. Formula

"Basis for terms of settlement between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League to which Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah agree and which they will endeavour respectively to get the Congress and the League to approve:

- (i) Subject to the terms set out below as regards the constitution for Free India, the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for Independence and will co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim Government for the transitional period.
- (2) After termination of the war, a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India, wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of adult suffrage or other practicable franchise shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decide in favour of forming a sovereign State separate from Hindustan, such decision shall be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of districts on the border to choose to join either State.
- (3) It will be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held.

- (4) In the event of separation, mutual agreements shall be entered into for safeguarding defence, and commerce and communications and other essential purposes.
- (5) Any transfer of population shall only be on an absolutely voluntary basis.
- (6) These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility of the governance of India."

## APPENDIX V

### Gandhiji's Proposals Dated 24th September 1944

"The areas should be demarcated by a Commission approved by the Congress and the League. The wishes of the inhabitants of the areas demarcated should be ascertained through the votes of the adult population of the areas or through some equivalent method.

If the vote is in favour of separation it shall be agreed that these areas shall form a separate State as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination and can therefore be constituted into two sovereign independent States.

There shall be a treaty of separation which should also provide for efficient and satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, internal communications, customs, commerce and the like, which must necessarily continue to be matters of common interest between the contracting parties.

The treaty shall also contain terms of safeguarding right of minorities in the two States.

Immediately on the acceptance of this agreement by the Congress and the League the two shall decide upon a common course of action for the attainment of independence of India.

The League will, however, be free to remain out of any direct action to which the Congress may resort and in which the League may not be willing to participate".

## APPENDIX VI

### Statistics of Population

TABLE I

#### INDIA : POPULATION, 1941

	Males	Females	Total
British India ...	153,045,000	142,782,000	295,809,000
States and Agencies ...	47,883,000	45,090,000	93,189,000
Total ...	200,928,000	187,872,000	388,998,000

TABLE II  
INDIA: PRINCIPAL COMMUNITIES, 1941

(All figures are given in thousands)

Province or State	Hindus other than Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Castes	Moslems	Christians	Sikhs	Total Popu- lation
Scheduled Castes						
Madras	34,731	8,068	3,895	2,017	0.4	47,312
Bombay	14,709	8,155	1,920	375	8	25,850
Bengal	17,650	7,379	33,075	166	16	60,307
U. P.	31,025	11,717	8,416	169	292	55,021
Punjab	6,702	1,449	16,217	505	2,757	28,419
Behar	22,174	4,930	4,716	35	13	36,340
C. P.	9,651	3,051	784	59	15	16,814
Assam	2,527	676	3,442	41	3	10,205
N. W. F. P.	187	..	2,789	11	58	3,038
Orissa	5,595	1,258	146	28	0.2	8,729
Sind	1,078	102	3,208	20	31	4,535
Total						
British India	110,550	29,921	49,359	3,482	4,165	295,609
Hyderabad (a)	10,482	2,928	2,097	220	5	16,389
Mysore (a)	5,282	1,405	445	113	0.3	7,329
Tiruvancore (a)	3,146	396	431	1,960	..	6,070
Kashmir (ab)	694	113	3,074	4	66	4,022
Gwalior (a)	3,461	..	221	2	2	4,006
Baroda (a)	1,969	241	224	9	0.6	2,855
Total, States and Agencies	55,227	8,692	19,360	2,634	1,526	99,189
Total, India	206,117	48,913	92,051(c)	6,317(d)	5,691	388,998

(a) The six States that appear here are those with the largest population.

(b) Including feudatories.

(c) The total population of India, recorded by communities at the Census of 1941 was 386,667,000. The remainder, 2,331,000, consists of persons in the North-West Agency and tribal areas beyond the administered border, whose community could not be ascertained. The conditions of the region, however, indicate that they may be regarded as Moslems. If they are counted as Moslems, the total number of Moslems in India becomes 94,289,000.

(d) The figures for Christians given in the Census overlap with those for Tribes. Allowing for this, the total number of Christians is estimated at 7,250,000.

## APPENDIX VII

## Financial Prospects of Pakistan

The following figures are taken from the Mody-Mathai memorandum on the 'Economic and Financial Aspects of Pakistan' submitted before the Sapru Committee :

## 1. Area and Population of Pakistan

	Area (Million acres)	
	Province wise	District wise
Eastern Zone	85.9	36.2
Western Zone	98.9	77.0
Total	184.8	113.2
	Population (millions)	
	Province wise	District wise
Eastern Zone	70.5	44.1
Western Zone	36.4	24.9
Total	106.9	69.0

## 2. Local Finance on the basis of existing boundaries

	(Rs. lacs)	
	REVENUE	EXPENDITURE
Assam	2.93	2.92
Bengal	14.32	13.71
N. W. Frontier	1.83	1.87
Punjab	12.11	11.49
Sind	4.29	4.05

## 3. Local finance of Pakistan if formed district-wise

	(Rs. lacs)	
	REVENUE	EXPENDITURE
Assam	88	88
Bengal	9.74	9.32
Punjab	7.21	7.08

## 4. Central budget of Pakistan

	NET REVENUE	
	Eastern Zone	Western Zone
	(Rs. Lakhs)	
Customs	12,36.3	5,82.9
Central Exercise	1,21.1	78.0
Corporation tax	73.5	17.1
Other Income taxes	2,97.5	1,50.4
Salt	2,07.6	119.1
Posts, telegraphs, currency and mint	36.0	2.13
Railways net loss	-140.8	-1.11.8
Miscellaneous	1.6	19.8
	<hr/> 13,92.8	<hr/> 8,768

	NET EXPENDITURE	
	Eastern	Western
	zone	zone
	(Rs. lakhs)	
Civil administration	2,03.1	1,45.8
Debt services	4,41.7	2,16.4
Superannuation allowances	65.5	40.7
Grants in aid to provinces*	30.0	2,05.0
Other Items	47.6	30.4
	<hr/> 7,87.9	<hr/> 6,38.3

5. Central budget of Pakistan formed district-wise

	NET REVENUE	
	Eastern	Western
	zone	zone
	(Rs. Lakhs)	
Customs	7,75.0	4,02.2
Central excise	75.5	53.8
Corporation tax	46.0	12.0
Other income-taxes	1,86.5	1,03.7
Salt	1,30.0	82.3
Post, telegraphs. currency & mint	22.0	14.7
Railways, net loss	88.5	77.2
Miscellaneous	1.0	13.6
	<hr/> 11,47.5	<hr/> 6,05.0

	NET EXPENDITURE	
	Eastern	Western
	zone	zone
	(Rs. Lakhs)	
Civil administration	1,26.8	1,00.6
Debt services	2,76.7	1,49.5
Superannuation allowances	41.0	28.0
Grants in aid to provinces	18.8	1,41.4
Other items	30.0	21.0
	<hr/> 4,93.3	<hr/> 4,40.5

6. Central budget of Pakistan Combined

	NET REVENUE	
	Province	District
	wise	wise
	(Rs. Lakhs)	
Customs	18,19.2	11,77.2
Central excise	1,99.1	72.3
Corporation tax	90.6	

\*This item covers the subv. provinces.

	Province wise	District wise
Other income taxes	4,47.7	2,90.2
Salt	3,26.7	2,12.2
Post, telegraphs, currency and mint	57.3	36.7
Railways, net loss	2,52.6	1,65.7
Miscellaneous	21.4	14.6
	<hr/> 27,09.6	<hr/> 17,52.5

NET EXPENDITURE  
(Rs. Lakhs)

	Province wise	District wise
Civil administration	9,48.9	2,27.4
Debt services	6,58.1	4,26.2
Superannuation allowances	1,06.2	69.0
Grant in aid to provinces	2,35.0	1,00.2
Other items	78.0	51.0
	<hr/> 14,26.2	<hr/> 9,33.8

7. *Classification of the area of Pakistan for agricultural purposes*  
(Million acres)

	Eastern Zone		Western Zone	
	Prov. wise	Dist. wise	Prov. wise	Dist. wise
According to survey				
Forests	85.9	36.2	99.9	77.0
Not available for cultivation	8.3	1.7	3.1	2.4
Other uncultivated land excluding current fallows	14.0	6.6	26.9	20.9
Current fallows	25.3	4.5	25.5	23.0
Current fallows	6.2	2.8	10.8	9.5
Net area actually sown	31.6	20.6	32.0	21.2

8. *Agricultural production in Pakistan province-wise*  
(Rs. lacs)

	East Zone	West Zone	Total
Food crops	100.01	49.04	149.05
Non-food crops	23.24	14.06	37.30
Total	<hr/> 123.25	<hr/> 63.35	<hr/> 186.35

9. *Agricultural production in Pakistan formed district-wise*  
(Thousand maunds)

	Eastern Zone	Western Zone
Coal and coke	— 69,377	— 56,314
Raw cotton	— 310	+ 2,610
Cotton piecegoods	— 918	— 1,304
Rice	+ 4,163	+ 2,537
Wheat	— 3,560	+ 11,299

(Thousand maunds)

Eastern Zone Western Zone

Raw jute	— 2,614	+ 4
Iron and steel	— 4,207	— 2,336
Oilseeds	— 7,795	+ 2,136
Salt	+ 3,981	+ 1,250
Sugar	— 1,885	— 3,905

## 10. Persons employed in industries

((Figures in thousands)

Eastern Zone Western Zone

Textiles	326.6	23.5	350.1
Engineering	113.4	20.8	134.2
Minerals and Metals	29.2	11.1	40.3
Food, drink, etc.	27.3	8.3	35.6
Chemicals, dyes	20.2	4.8	25.0
Paper and printing	25.9	3.8	29.7
Wood, stone and glass	15.1	7.7	22.8
Gins and presses	3.9	...	3.9
Hides and skins	7.7	2.1	9.8
Miscellaneous	14.5	1.1	15.6
Government and seasonal factories	173.8	103.0	276.6
Total	762.6	186.2	948.8

## 11. Composition of Indian army

Assam	...	...	10,000
Bengal	...	...	100,000
Bihar	...	...	40,000
Bombay	...	...	100,000
C. P. & Berar	...	...	25,000
Madras	...	...	260,000
N.-W. Frontier	...	...	70,000
Orissa	...	...	3,000
Punjab	...	...	600,000
Sind	...	...	5,000
U. P.	...	...	200,000
Indian States	...	...	250,000
Total			1663,000

## 12. Distribution of joint-stock banks

	Allahabad Bank	Calcutta Commercial	Central Bank.	Imperial Bank	Punjab National.
Assam	2	14	...	3	...
Bengal	3	33	9	28	2
Bihar	1	16	9	18	1
Bombay	3	...	16	34	1
C. P.	4	...	...	17	...



	Allahabad Bank	Calcutta Commercial	Central Bank	Imperial Bank	Punjab National
Madras	1	2	11	96	...
N. W. F. P.	...	...	1	2	3
Orissa	...	...	...	3	...
Punjab	8	...	42	68	39
Sind	...	...	4	7	3
U.P.	43	3	27	53	12
Others	2	...	2	47	3
<hr/>					
Total British India	67	67	113	336	64

### 13. Inter-provincial migration.

( Figures in thousands )

Province of birth	Assam	Bengal	Bihar and Orissa	Bom- bay	C.P. & Berar	Pun. jab	N.-W. F.P.	U.P.	Total
Assam	...	63	2	...	1	...	...	...	67
Baluchistan	...	...	...	35	1	...	4	...	40
Bengal	5,75	...	1,58	6	7	1	5	31	7,83
Bihar and Orissa	4,72	11,39	...	2	52	...	1	70	17,36
Bombay	7	8	7	...	1,05	1	9	8	1,45
C.P. & Berar	82	46	89	55	...	...	2	15	2,89
Madras	57	42	41	60	13	1	8	3	2,19
N.-W. F. P.	1	2	1	12	1	...	53	4	74
Punjab	6	25	15	91	16	85	...	98	3,36
U. P.	68	3,48	1,27	1,37	1,19	11	2,32	...	10,42

### Families working at

Families born in	Jamshedpur	Jharia	Dehri-on-Sone
Bihar	280	865	192
Bengal	107	22	2
Orissa	121	14	...
U. P.	97	35	10
C. P. & Berar	149	73	9
Punjab	79	8	20
Madras	98	8	...
N. W. F. P.	10	...	10
Bombay	7	...	21
Assam	5	...	...
Indian States	47	9	7
Nepal	40	3	4
Total families surveyed	10,40	10,80	254

14. *Inter-provincial trade*

(Thousand maunds)

	<i>Eastern Zone</i>			<i>Western Zone</i>		
	Imports	Exports	Balance	Imports	Exports	Balance
Coal and coke	220,443	151,076	— 69,367	57,934	1,620	— 56,314
Raw cotton	638	328	— 310	6,325	8,935	+ 2,610
Cotton piecegoods	2,786	1,868	— 918	2,180	876	— 1,304
Rice	11,834	16,002	— 4,168	4,484	7,021	+ 2,537
Wheat	3,767	207	— 3,560	87,35	20,034	+ 11,299
Raw jute	31,726	29,112	— 2,614	2	6	+ 4
Iron and Steel	15,638	11,431	— 4,207	2,047	2,057	— 2,336
Oilseeds	9,059	1,264	— 7,795	3,119	5,255	+ 2,136
Salt	7,222	11,203	+ 3,981	989	2,189	+ 1,250
Sugar	3,071	1,186	— 1,885	5,091	1,186	— 3,905



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